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THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,
WITH
EXPLANATORY NOTES:
TO WHICH ARE ADDED A CONDENSED VIEW OF THE
PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST,
AND A
TRANSLATION OF THE EPISTLE,
PREPARED FOR THIS WORK.

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GOSPELS," "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES," "EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is the fruit of long-continued study of the Epistle in the original, to which study the various helps of biblical literature have been made subservient. My aim has been, in freedom from any improper bias, to exhibit the thoughts and sentiments of the Epistle according to the true intent of its author; the original Greek being throughout the real basis of the Notes.

As the Epistle is, eminently, a continuous course of thought, it ought to be read as such, so that the connection of parts may be discovered and retained in the reader's mind. Much of its benefit is lost when only fragments, here and there, are read. As contributing to a connected and comprehensive view, the analysis given in the Introduction, section seventh, may be of service. I may also take the liberty of pointing out sections fourth, fifth, and sixth of the Introduction as particularly helpful to a clear apprehension and a just appreciation of the principal parts of the Epistle. For clearness' sake, also, the Epistle is here divided according to its main parts, and the text presented in paragraphs, while, however, for convenience in consulting the Notes, the division into chapters and the numbering of the verses are retained.

As the common version of this Epistle is not so well executed as that of the New Testament books generally, and as the passages inviting emendation are more numerous than could be well introduced into the Notes, I have prepared an independent translation. This translation, aided by the recent more ap-

proved editions of the original, and designed, of course, only for private use, is as literal as the different idioms of the two languages will allow, regard being paid to grammatical tenses, to the collocation of words and clauses, to the structure of sentences, and to employing, for the same original word, the same, or some form of the same, English word, in the several passages where it is found. A degree of harshness may be occasioned by conformity to the original structure of sentences; but it is better to encounter this than to modify the structure at the risk of also modifying the author's sense. Yet here and there, where the sense evidently requires it, a word or a clause is introduced, and indicated by *Italics* as a supplied expression.

In any translation, there will be room for diversity of judgment as to given passages; and particularly so when, as in the present instance, the original is a work of great rhetorical skill on the part of its author, and of nice appreciation of beauty, of elevation, and of impressiveness in style. The reverence for GOD and his adorable SON cherished by its author, and the solicitude that the followers of Jesus might adhere to HIM, their Leader in the way of life, with ever-growing trust till they should reach the goal of their high calling in the perfected state of heavenly glory, were harmonious with this mode of execution.

As a labor of love, the volume is commended to "the APOSTLE and HIGH-PRIEST of our profession," with the desire that, through HIS blessing, it may contribute to an enlarged and clearer understanding, and deeper consciousness of the value, of this part of the divine oracles, and thus to HIS glory.

H. J. R.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *AUTHORSHIP AND CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE EPISTLE.*

THE author is not named either in the opening sentence or in the course of the epistle. The few sentences of a personal nature, also, xiii. 18, 19, 22, 23, though favorable to the opinion that it was written by the Apostle Paul, and showing that those who were addressed knew from whom it was sent, are not sufficiently clear to be decisive on this point. In consequence, from an early part of the third century even to our own times, its authorship has been a subject of inquiry.

In the ancient Oriental churches covering the region to which it was first sent, and therefore favorably situated for knowing from whom and from whose authority it emanated, the belief that it was written by Paul was held and retained from the earliest times. In the Western churches, less favorably situated for forming an opinion, the prevailing belief set in a different direction until the middle of the fourth century, when it was acknowledged in that part, also, of the Christian church as substantially a work of the Apostle Paul. Among ecclesiastical writers since the early part of the third century, the apostle has been variously connected by name with the epistle, either as its writer, or as having furnished the materials for it, while some associate of his might, with these materials, have performed the work of composing it, or, having independently composed it, received his sanction in sending it to the place of its destination, so that it went with the authority of his name, and in popular language

might be called his epistle. Its style — that is, its diction — has, from the early period just mentioned, been extensively felt as unfavorable to the opinion that the apostle was the actual writer.

While the historical evidence respecting its authorship is conflicting, and the internal evidence from its style of composition is unfavorable to its being an actual production of the apostle, its general air, as to consciousness of authority and of the right to receive deference from those to whom it was sent, and as to a winning suavity of manner, is apostolic, and the few passages of a personal nature harmonize with the character and circumstances of Paul. The opinion, which has also come down from remote antiquity, that the epistle, though not composed by himself, was written with his knowledge, and sent with his sanction, agrees well with the two facts, that it was received at the earliest times in the Eastern churches as a production of Paul's, and yet that its diction is not after the manner of Paul.

The question of its actual authorship is a subordinate one. The epistle was quoted from as a sacred book with frequency, and in the same manner as the epistles of Paul were quoted from, by the earliest Christian writer after the apostles, towards the end of the first century; it was, as already stated, received by the Eastern churches from the earliest times, and eventually by the Western; and those early writers who held it not to be a composition of the apostle's, yet perpetually, in their citations from it, speak as citing the words of the apostle, like Calvin, of later times, who, while he maintains, in his prefatory view of the epistle, that it cannot have been actually composed by Paul, yet ranks it without hesitation among the apostolic epistles, and speaks frequently, in his commentary, of *the apostle* as saying thus and thus. The question appears to have been with them a question of literature, not affecting the authority of the epistle.

Allowing, then, that the style of composition indicates a different hand from that of the apostle, we have sufficient ground for the belief that the writer reflected the apostle's views, and that the epistle had the sanction of Paul. And thus, it would hold a place among the authoritative books of the New Testament on

the same ground as that on which the Gospel of Mark and the writings of Luke stand: the Gospel of Mark sustained by the authority of the Apostle Peter, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts by the authority of Paul.

§ 2. *TO WHOM THE EPISTLE WAS SENT.*

That the epistle was sent, primarily, to the Hebrew Christians of some particular locality, and yet designed to be extensively circulated among the Hebrew Christians in general, is probable from the salutations which it contains, xiii. 24; from the personal relations which appear to have subsisted between the writer and those whom he addressed, xiii. 18, 19, 23; and from circumstances in their past history which he calls to their remembrance, vi. 10; x. 32-34. But to what particular community it was sent, neither the epistle itself nor any tradition enables us to decide. That it was sent to a church, or a circle of churches, in Palestine seems natural.

§ 3. *TIME WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.*

It was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 or 72 of the Christian era, since, from the general aspect of the epistle, the temple-worship appears to have been still observed. As those to whom it was sent had already suffered persecution, x. 32-34, and as persecution, probably of a more serious character, was foreseen, xii. 4, 6, we may assign it to the times when the public troubles among the Jews were beginning to become more aggravated and the exposure of Christians to persecution more probable. This corresponds to the time included within 62 and 64.

The means, however, for forming an opinion respecting its date are too meagre and indistinct to warrant an approach to positiveness.

§ 4. *CONDITION OF THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS FOR WHOSE BENEFIT THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.*

The condition of the Hebrew Christians was such as severely tested the sincerity and firmness of their faith in Christ and their

adherence to Christianity as a religion distinct from that of Moses.

1. We learn, from Acts xxi. 20, that a vast number of Jews who had avowed themselves believers in Christ were still zealously attached to the Mosaic observances, and insisted on their being retained among Christians; and, from Acts xv. 1, 5, it is clear that, at the time there referred to, the observance of circumcision was regarded by many of the Jewish Christians as essential to salvation. From among these, doubtless, proceeded the Judaizing teachers, against whom the Apostle Paul found it so necessary to guard the churches, as men who were subverting the gospel of Christ. Without doubt there continued to be among the converted Jews in Palestine and elsewhere many persons who, at best, in point of doctrine were but semi-Christians; and Judaizing teachers were perpetually spreading everywhere their baleful dogmas. That many would continue to waver between genuine, complete Christianity and Judaism, afraid so far to commit themselves to Christianity as wholly to give up Judaism, and that many would entirely apostatize from Christ, unless aided by the timely warnings and encouragements, and the convincing arguments, of some one who knew how to gain the Jewish mind and who could obtain credence among the vacillating Hebrew converts, could not but be obvious, even were there no actual instances of this kind, to so clear-sighted an observer and so deeply interested a friend as was the author of this epistle.

2. At the time when this epistle was written, as appears from internal evidence, the Jewish temple at Jerusalem was still standing and the rites of the Jewish religion were still observed. Not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem were eye-witnesses of the Jewish worship, and participated in the various ceremonial observances, but the Jews in all parts of Palestine and elsewhere had occasion to be repeatedly at Jerusalem for religious, as well as other, purposes. Many who had embraced the gospel, more or less intelligently, still cherished a fondness for the Jewish worship and its accompaniments, and dreaded to be separated

from the Jewish community and debarred from the temple. The Jewish service was particularly attractive to those who were fond of show, especially in contrast with the simple and unimposing worship of Christians, who were separated either by distance or by inclination from the pomp of the Jewish worship. All the impressions and associations of early youth and their love of the Jewish country and nation would be connected with the temple and its services, and, so long as the temple stood and its services were continued, a powerful influence would proceed from them, adverse, in the case of many, to a steadfast continuance in Christianity. The radical distinction between the Judaism of *their times* and the religion of the Messiah was not perceived by them, and they were not well prepared to meet the issue of discipleship to Christ and departure from the prevailing Judaism on the one hand, or, on the other, of adherence to Judaism and renunciation of Jesus. The thought of an extensive severance from Jewish customs was appalling, while yet they admitted that Jesus was the Messiah. They did not understand that the Messiah was *above* Judaism, and that Judaism must give way to him; they rather thought that he was to bear rule through Judaism reformed and perpetuated. The thought of separation from the Jewish community and of exclusion from the Jewish temple was more than they could well bear.

3. Besides, these Hebrew Christians were, in consequence of their avowing the religion of Christ, exposed to various forms of persecution. Taunts, with other petty annoyances, and imprisonment were employed by their opponents to draw them away from their attachment to Christ, and to prevent the spread of the new religion. The spirit which at first actuated the Jewish rulers in their endeavors to prevent the cause of Christ from being advocated, as shown in the early chapters of the Acts and in the conduct of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, also by the Jewish rulers and by private persons in their treatment of Paul, as shown in the later chapters of Acts, was ever stimulating the determined adherents to the Jewish rites and ceremonies. However much the Jewish authorities might be restrained by the

diminution of their power under the Roman rule, they yet had abundant opportunities to annoy the followers of Christ; and Roman magistrates, unable to distinguish between Jews and Jewish Christians, but regarding them as alike hostile to the imperial government, were sufficiently ready to side with the Jewish opponents of Christianity, and to harass the 'sect that was everywhere spoken against.' Acts xxviii. 22.

To these trying circumstances this epistle makes sufficiently clear allusion in x. 32-34; xii. 4; xiii. 3.

4. In addition to these circumstances, the personal spiritual condition of many, at least, among the Hebrews exposed them to great hazards. From the anxiety so often expressed by the writer in regard to their steadfastness, in ii. 3; iii. 12, 13; iv. 1; vi. 1-8, and other passages; from the rebuke, in v. 12-14, of their failure to make progress in religious knowledge, and, in x. 25, of their neglect of opportunities for religious worship, it is evident that many among them had not become well grounded in the distinctive principles of the Christian religion, and were but lukewarm in their religious affections. They were consequently so vacillating that they might become an easy prey to the enticements of wily opponents of the gospel, or to doubts which readily arise in the absence of a resolute adherence to a good cause.

§ 5. *PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE.*

The Hebrew Christians being so eminently exposed to the hazard of renouncing their profession and of casting away all the animating hopes which they had been led to indulge, the purpose of the epistle is obvious; namely, to fortify them against these unfavorable circumstances and to confirm both the wavering and the steadfast in adherence to Christ. To this end, it was necessary to set forth with vividness the paramount claims of the religion of Christ, and to convince the Hebrews that, if they should abandon the gospel, they would really abandon the only sure ground of hope for eternal life. Since the Hebrew Christians had always held Moses in profound reverence, as an

authorized servant of God, and his religion as divinely instituted, it was necessary to bring the Christian religion, or dispensation, into comparison with the Mosaic, and, by showing its paramount and even exclusive claims, to free them from their former predilections and to dissipate the dread of abandoning the existing Jewish community.

§ 6. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE.

In its general character, the epistle is not so much a logical argumentation of certain points as a vivid setting forth of distinctive fundamental truths in the Christian system, in order to establish its readers in their already professed reception of that system. It discusses these truths, not in order to *prove* them, but in order deeply to impress them on the readers' minds, to show their harmony with the Old Testament, and thus to strengthen the Hebrews' faith in them; also to exhibit their necessary results. It *declares*, for instance, and assumes as undeniable, — the well-known facts in the case being themselves the irrefragable evidence, — that Jesus is the Son of God; and, after vividly setting forth this truth, and showing his superiority to angels and then to Moses, it maintains the authoritative character of his gospel and the inevitable doom which will ensue from neglecting it. It also *declares* Jesus to be the predicted High-priest, expatiates on his superlative excellence as such, and details the necessary result of his entering on this office in the abrogation of the Mosaic economy and of the Levitical priesthood, and in the exclusiveness of the Christian scheme as procuring forgiveness and salvation. Thus asserting as worthy of all acceptance the Messiahship of Jesus, it seeks to correct certain practical errors in regard to him, and to open the legitimate comprehensiveness of his official position and of the authority which is vested in him.

This positive and didactic feature it is necessary to apprehend, in order justly to appreciate the epistle and to see the true force of many of its views. It was the mode of treatment naturally suggested to a writer who was addressing not unbelievers, but

those who had avowed their acceptance of Christ and who still maintained it, though with less firmness than was consistent with their safety, and who therefore needed *confirmation* in their faith rather than *conversion* to the faith; who needed enlargement of views and a just apprehension of the connections and relations of truths which they had embraced, rather than to be reasoned into the primary truths of the gospel. They had embraced the gospel, but did not thoroughly understand it; they had not sufficiently seen and felt its excellence and its paramount position as compared with the Mosaic law. The epistle was designed to give this more full and thorough understanding of the gospel, and consequently it *affirms*, what its readers did not require to be *proved*, such essential points as the divine Sonship and the priestly position of Jesus, and argues from them either as conceded points, or as necessary to the full idea of his being the Messiah.

As addressed to Hebrew Christians, the epistle is also throughout adapted to the Hebrew mind in the analogies and other reasonings which it employs, and in its applications of the Old Testament Scriptures. The vital truths and conclusions which it presents are, indeed, for all men; but the *manner* of elucidating these truths and of conducting the readers to these conclusions was specially adapted to those who were primarily addressed, and was most happily fitted to secure their unwavering assent.

§ 7. ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

The epistle may be divided into five main PARTS, which, however, as well as the subdivisions generally, are not by its author formally separated from each other, since it is a beautifully compacted whole, like a dovetailed piece of work, the transitions from part to part, though sufficiently discernible, not being abrupt, but interwoven and, apparently without design, maintaining continuity of thought. Hortatory passages, also, sometimes of very considerable extent, occur at appropriate points.

PART I. — CHAPTERS I., II.

Superiority of the Son of God to the angels; his appointed inferiority, and his subsequent elevation to perfect glory. Propriety of this appointment.

The epistle opens with a general declaration of the dignity of THE SON, in whom God, having formerly spoken to the Hebrew fathers in the prophets, finally spake to their descendants, and who, having himself made effectual expiation for sins, ascended to the right hand of God, having become as far superior to the angels as his name is superior to theirs, i. 1-3.

With this last thought, the first topic is introduced, namely: *the superiority of the Son of God to the angels*. This superiority appears, first, from the superiority of his name, or title, to theirs. No angel was ever addressed as *the Son of God* in such terms as involved sameness of nature with God and as would authorize the appropriating of this title to him exclusively, vs. 4, 5.

This superiority appears, next, from the fact that the angels have been required to worship him, verse 6.

Then, again, the language used concerning angels and the Son respectively is indicative of his pre-eminence over them. The angels are called *winds* and *lightning*, as being only servants of God, promptly obeying His commands. They thus receive appellations which associate them with the agencies of nature, and occupy only the position of servants. But the Son is addressed as a partaker of deity: he is described as a King whose dominion is to be everlasting, whose government is unexceptionably righteous, and who has received honor and bliss pre-eminently beyond all other kings. Still further, he is declared to be the Creator of the earth and the heavens, to be imperishable and immutable. Moreover, no angel was ever invited to a seat at the right hand of God, with the promise of universal dominion. So far from this, the angels are all only ministering spirits sent forth for service in behalf of those who are to receive salvation, vs. 7-14.

The superiority of THE SON to the angels being thus shown, the correspondingly greater obligation to give heed to his teach-

ings is asserted. If the revelation made by the agency of angels, that is, the Mosaic, was firm, and disobedience to it was inevitably followed with the threatened punishment, how can *we* escape if we neglect so great salvation, which was first declared by the Lord Jesus himself and has come to us confirmed by those who heard him, and by the joint testimony of God in many and various miracles? ii. 1-4.

If we neglect it, we cannot escape, for it is not to angels that God subjected the new dispensation, but to HIM whom, as described in a certain passage of Scripture, God had made a little lower than the angels, and whom he had subsequently exalted to glory and to dominion over all things. In other words, the new religious economy, with all its authority and blessings, is placed in subjection to Jesus, since to him God had subjected all things. The Son of God in becoming a man was made somewhat lower than the angels; but on account of his submitting to death, in this inferior condition, for the spiritual benefit of mankind, he is crowned with glory and honor, ii. 5-9.

The appointment that *He* who was to lead sons of God among men to glory, should himself be elevated to his perfect glory in heaven through sufferings, is specially appropriate, for both he who makes expiation and those for whom the expiation is made are all of one Father, and consequently become prepared for glory by a similar course of treatment. Hence he calls them his brethren. As the Father had given him the children of God to be redeemed, it is proper that between these children and himself there should be a oneness of nature. Since these children are human beings, he also became a partaker of human nature, so that by means of his death he might destroy Satan's power of death, and deliver those who through fear of death had been perpetually held in bondage. For it was not *angels* that he came to deliver, but *men*. It was, therefore, befitting that he should be like them in all things, so that he might become a merciful and faithful High-priest, in order to make propitiation for their sins, for, in that he hath himself suffered through temptations, he is able to aid the tempted, ii. 10-18.

Both in his pre-existent state as the SON OF GOD and in his subsequent state as the glorified MAN, he is superior to the angels. Hence the superior and permanent claims of his gospel.

PART II.—CHAPTERS III., IV.

Superiority of Jesus Christ to Moses in the household of God.

Jesus and Moses both faithful to their respective trusts, iii. 1, 2. Jesus worthy of more glory than Moses, as being the founder and furnisher of the household of God, vs. 3, 4. The faithfulness of Moses, that of a servant *in* this household; the faithfulness of Christ, that of the Son *over* the household; of which household believers in Christ are members, vs. 5, 6. — The idea of an oriental family of distinction was present to the writer's mind. In such a family, while the head-servant, or steward, occupied a position highly honorable and of great responsibility, the eldest son was co-partner in the honor and rights of the father, and was joint-director of affairs, so that he was *over* the household.

Hortatory section, in which the Hebrews are urged by the fate of their forefathers, who came out from Egypt, to make sure for themselves of the heavenly rest promised to the household, or people, of God, iii. 7-19. The promise of entering into His rest, which God made to their forefathers, and which proved of no benefit to them, on account of their unbelief, still remains. This rest is the appointed recompense for believers: unbelievers are debarred from it. The rest still remains, for though God entered on His rest at the foundation of the world, it was promised to the Israelites in the desert, and long afterwards the men of David's generation were warned against following the example of their unbelieving forefathers, and exhorted to be believing and obedient while To-day should endure. Hence the rest still remains for believers; they are to enter into it when their earthly labors shall be ended, iv. 1-10.

The exhortation receives additional enforcement from the consideration that the word of God is living and effective, and penetrates to the inmost soul, judging the very thoughts of

men; nothing is concealed from Him; all things are open to His inspection, iv. 11-13.

In these circumstances of danger, the followers of Jesus ought to hold fast their confidence in him; he is their great High-priest in heaven, and as he had while on earth been tempted like themselves, he is able to feel for them in their infirmities. Through him they have access to the throne of grace, and may obtain mercy and grace that will assure to them opportune aid in all their trials, iv. 14-16.

Thus the second part terminates like the first, ii. 17, 18, with a cheering mention of Jesus as the High-priest of his followers; it closes, also, with an incitement to holding fast the profession in respect to Jesus, as their High-priest, which was mentioned at its opening, iii. 1, and thus happily prepares the way for introducing the third part.

PART III.—CHAPTERS V., VI., VII.

The high-priesthood of Jesus superior to the Levitical high-priesthood.

This topic and the results which flow from it are evidently the main burden of the epistle, and were present to the writer's mind at its outset, as well as in its progress. For, having brought into prominent view, in the second chapter, the humiliation of Christ in assuming human nature, he represents, in ii. 17, the design of this humiliation to be, that Christ might become a merciful and faithful High-priest. Then, again, in introducing the second part, at iii. 1, he mentions Christ anew as the High-priest; and in closing the second part, after inciting his readers to diligence in view of their spiritual perils and of the scrutiny to which their inmost thoughts were exposed, he encourages them by a repeated mention of their great High-priest above, who by virtue of his own experience regards them with compassion, and through whom they may confidently look for opportune divine favor, iv. 14-16.

This encouragement to expect, through Jesus the High-priest, all needed aid in answer to confiding prayer, is grounded on

the very *design* of the high-priestly office, as divinely established. A high-priest, as being taken from among men, is appointed in behalf of men in their concerns with God, that he may offer both their oblations and their sacrifices, for sins, v. 1. This design of the high-priest's office makes it requisite that he should be able to be compassionate towards the ignorant and erring, since he is himself conscious of moral infirmity, and must therefore offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as those of the people, v. 2, 3. A call from God to this office is also requisite, v. 4.

The requisites for this office are found in Jesus. He did not assume this honor to himself, but God specially appointed him to it, v. 5, 6. Christ also, though he was a Son, learned, by his experience of temptations and sufferings while on earth, the nature and circumstances of human obedience, and thus knows how to pity his followers, v. 7, 8. And having, with this complete qualification for his office, been exalted to his perfected state in heaven, he became the author of salvation to all that obey him, thus securing for them the highest good, v. 9.

While, however, these requisites are all found in Jesus, a peculiarity is distinctly brought to view in which he differs from the Jewish high-priests; namely, he is not of the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek, v. 10.

This peculiarity relative to Jesus having been mentioned, a digression of a hortatory character is entered on, in order to stimulate the Hebrews to greater mental and spiritual activity, and to apprise them of the danger to which their vacillating state of mind exposed them, v. 11-14; vi. 1-8.

The writer then apologizes for the strain of rebuke and warning in which he had addressed them. He had thus spoken through a desire that they might be earnest in seeking confirmation of their hope of heavenly blessings, and might follow the example of those who had attained to the final enjoyment of those promised blessings, vi. 9-12. Encouragement to seek those blessings is ample, since they rest on the promise and the oath of the unchangeable God. The hope set before the follow-

ers of Jesus is, therefore, full of consolation; it is unfailling and firm; it reaches to heaven, whither Jesus has already gone in behalf of his followers, as the High-priest FOREVER after the order of Melchizedek, vi. 13-20.

The writer now returns to the consideration of the high-priesthood of Jesus. As Jesus is a High-priest according to the order, or rank, of Melchizedek, he *first* presents the historical items relative to this personage; he *then* mentions, in order to show the striking resemblance between Melchizedek and Jesus the Son of God, the etymological significance of Melchizedek's name and kingly title, his being without any known father or mother, and without a recorded beginning or ending of life, and, as the particular point of coincidence here had in view, his abiding, so far as the sacred records disclose, a priest PERPETUALLY; thus confirming the declaration in vi. 20, that Jesus is become a High-priest FOREVER, vii. 1-3.

In arguing the superiority of Jesus to the Levitical high-priests, the greatness of Melchizedek, according to whose rank, and like to whom, he is made a High-priest, is shown. Melchizedek was greater even than Abraham, the patriarch, since he took tithes from Abraham and pronounced a blessing on him: he was greater than the Levitical priests; for, while they receive tithes from descendants of Abraham, he received them from Abraham himself: besides, they are confessedly dying men, while Melchizedek is testified of as only a living person: he was also greater than Levi, the head of the priestly tribe; for, so to speak, Levi paid tithes, through Abraham, to Melchizedek, vii. 4-10. As Jesus is of the rank of Melchizedek, it follows that he is superior to any one of the Levitical priests.

The fact that Jesus is now invested with the high-priesthood draws in its train important consequences relative to the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic law. The Levitical priesthood was inefficacious for the ultimate purpose of a priesthood; else a priest of a different kind would not have been set in office, vii. 11. This change in the priesthood necessitates a change in the law, vii. 12. That the law was disregarded, as being no longer

of authority, in this appointment of Jesus as the High-priest, appears from the genealogy of Jesus and from the very nature of the system which he carries into effect, vii. 13-17. The law is actually set aside, and a better ground of hope towards God is introduced, vii. 18, 19.

The superiority of Christ's priesthood is further shown by the fact that, unlike the Levitical priesthood, it was established with the solemnity of an oath on the part of God; vii. 20-22; also, from its being unchangeable, inasmuch as he abides FOREVER, vii. 23-25.

It was also suitable that we should have such a High-priest as Jesus is; not a sinful man, such as the law appoints, but THE SON, appointed by the special declaration and oath of God, and exalted to perfect glory forever, vii. 26-28.

PART IV. — CHAPTERS VIII., IX., X. 1-18.

Superiority of the high-priestly ministration of Christ in the heavenly Holy of holies.

Christ, as High-priest, ministers in the heavenly Holy of holies, viii. 1-5. His service is as much more excellent than that of the Levitical high-priests, as the covenant by which he acts is superior to theirs, vs. 6, 7. The old covenant is exceptionable; hence, the new is required; the promises of the new covenant recited, and the old represented as abrogated, vs. 8-13.

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THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTERS I., II.

THE SON OF GOD CONTRASTED WITH THE ANGELS.

§ Dignity of the Son of God asserted in general terms, i. 1-4. § His superiority to the angels, i. 5-14.

§ The consequent superior obligation to obey him, ii. 1-4. § His appointed inferiority to the angels by his becoming a man, and his subsequent elevation to his perfected state of glory, ii. 5-9. § Propriety of his becoming a partaker of human nature, ii. 10-18.

¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake

PART I.

CHAPTERS I., II.

THE SON OF GOD CONTRASTED WITH
THE ANGELS.

This part opens with an assertion, in general terms, of the dignity of the Son of God, i. 1-4, and proceeds to maintain his superiority to the angels, 5-14. The consequent superior obligation to obey him is next urged, ii. 1-4. His appointed inferiority to the angels by his becoming a MAN is then presented; also, his subsequent elevation to his perfected state of glory, 5-9. The propriety of this intervening state of inferiority is particularly shown, 10-18.

CHAPTER I.

1. *At sundry times and in divers manners; more literally, in many parts and in many ways.* Reference is here had to the many successive portions in which the communications from God to men, which are presented as a whole in the Old Testament, were made from age to age; perhaps, also, to other communications which the design of God did not require to be preserved in writing. The revelations

in the Old Testament were given in numerous portions, successively from age to age; also on various occasions during the official service of each prophet, and cover a large period in the world's history. These revelations were made, also, through prophets who acted as servants of God, separately from one another and in successive times, and not as a contemporaneous body of men, like the apostles, under the authority, and unfolding the teachings, or the principles, of one common Master who had appeared personally and given the requisite credentials of being the authorized revealer of God's will. The time during which the agency of prophets was employed was extended over many centuries, and thus, as the prophets were but mortal men, the communications from God must have been in numerous portions. Often, too, disclosures from God were made, during the prophetic ages, in reference to persons and exigencies, which

in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath

did not directly concern other persons and occasions, and sometimes such disclosures pertained rather indirectly to the spiritual and eternal interests of men. — *The divers manners, or many ways*, refer to the various methods which God employed in making known his will to the prophets for the instruction, guidance, warning, or encouragement of men. It would seem from expressions in the Old Testament that God sometimes *directly* imparted to prophets what they should declare; at other times, he instructed them through the agency of angels. Sometimes his will was expressed as clearly as language was capable of making it known; at other times, signs and symbols were employed as showing his will. Visions were, also, used for the same purpose. || *Unto the fathers*; the forefathers of the Hebrews from their commencement as a people as far down as to the ceasing of prophets in the nation, about 400 years before the coming of Christ. || *By the prophets*; literally, *in the prophets*. God is here represented as the real author of the communications which the prophets made. He was *in* the prophets, speaking *in* and *through* them; so that their messages came really from him. Compare Matt. x. 20. The prophets were, as far as their nature and their essential relation to God were concerned, on the same level as those whom they addressed; differing only in being made agents of God's communications. — During all the time in which God was thus variously and occasionally making known his will, the revelation was fragmentary and incomplete. The fulness of time was not yet come for completing the revelation. This was reserved for the days of the Messiah.

2. *In these last days*; literally, according to the best critical editions of the original, *at the last, or at the last part, the ending, of these days*. This is a mode of speaking which was peculiar to the Hebrews. It originated from the fact that, agreeably to divine

predictions, they were expecting the advent of the Messiah. His advent was the grand epoch in the world's history, and constituted a dividing line between its two great portions, namely, the time *before* his advent, and the time, or the ages, *after* it, which time would endure forever, since the Messiah's kingdom would be fully developed only in the eternal world. Among the Hebrews who lived *before* this event, the time then passing was denominated *this age, these times, this world*; and the period *after* this event was designated by corresponding terms, chiefly by the expression *the world, or the age, which is coming, or briefly, the world to come*. The same technical terms would naturally be used by a writer who was contrasting, after the Messiah had made his appearance, the two periods, since his Jewish readers would at once understand *these days* as a designation of *the time* which had reached its end, now that *the age, or world, to come* had actually been introduced by the advent of the Messiah. — When the ante-Messianic times were approaching their end, in other words, when that period familiarly known as *these times* was closing up, Christ was announced by his harbinger, John the Baptist, as about to appear; and shortly He himself came as *the promised One*. The new age, *the world to come*, which was to endure forever, then commenced. — The translation, *in these last days*, though it is not a grammatical representation of the genuine original, conveys a general idea of the true meaning, since the term, *the last days*, is employed in Scripture to denote *the days of the Messiah's dispensation*, as being the last division of time for the human race. See Acts ii. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 1; 1 Peter i. 20; 2 Peter iii. 3; 1 John ii. 18; Jude 18. But the original is here more specific and fixes the attention on the *closing up* of the Mosaic dispensation and the *entering* of the Messiah on his official work. At that

appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the

point of time, God spake *by*, more literally *in*, His Son. He then *spake*, not *hath spoken*, because the idea is not that now at the appointed time God has begun to speak and during the progress of the Messiah's dispensation *is still speaking* to us in His Son, though this sentiment is unquestionably true; but the idea is, that at the ending of *the former times*, the great fact took place that God sent his Son and spake in him to us, Hebrews, the posterity of those to whom the prophets had been sent.—Since this epistle was written by a Christian Hebrew to Hebrew fellow-disciples for their special benefit, it was natural that the relation between them and their ancestors should frequently appear.—While the revelations through the prophets were in various parts and still left room for additions, and pointed forward to something better yet to be introduced, the revelation by the Son of God is complete and final, since no superior agency can be employed. Revelation has reached its height. This revelation, also, in conformity with ancient prophecy relative to “the last days” and with its own nature as making no account of national distinctions, but regarding men everywhere in their relation to God as their common Creator and Judge, is designed for all men.—|| *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things*; that is, *whom he appointed* possessor and lord of all things. In Hebrew families of early times, the first-born son was the *heir* by way of eminence. He not only received a double portion of the paternal estate, Deut. xxi. 17, but on arriving at maturity he was considered, during the father's lifetime, as joint-possessor of the estate and was associated with his father in the management of affairs. Thus, as we learn from Gen. 24th chapter, when Abraham sent his servant to his kinsman Bethuel, to obtain a daughter of his as Isaac's wife, the transaction appears to have been conducted with Laban, Bethuel's son, quite as much as with Bethuel himself; so much so,

that when the two names are mentioned jointly, that of Laban, the son, is mentioned first. In conformity with this view, the idea of *heirship* in respect to Christ, an idea naturally connected with that of Sonship, is simply that of the receiving of possession and dominion. The divine appointment was, that the Son of God should be possessor and Lord of all, by virtue of his filial relation and his fidelity in that relation; and this thought would be readily apprehended by persons habituated to oriental views and practices relative to heirship. The relation of the first-born son to his father and to the family, in oriental regions, would make the term *heir*, as applied to the Son of God, not only intelligible, but singularly expressive.—In respect to the possession of all things and to universal lordship accorded to Christ, see Ps. ii. 8: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;” Ps. ex. 1: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;” Matt. xi. 27: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father;” Matt. xxviii. 18: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” 1 Pet. iii. 22: “Who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” See also, Phil. ii. 9–11.—|| *By whom also he made the worlds*. The creation of the visible universe is here ascribed to the Son of God, as the divinely appointed agent of this work. Creation is the work of God, and is expressly represented as discriminating its author from all pretended deities; so that the Creator is truly God. See Ps. xevi. 5: “For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens;” Is. xlii. 5–8: “Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and stretched them out,” etc. Compare, also, Heb. xi. 3: “The worlds were framed by the word of God.” But, in the apportionment, as

worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our

we may say, of divine operations, the agency of creating the universe was assigned to the Son of God. See John i. 3: "All things were made by him;" Col. i. 16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible," etc; 1 Cor. viii. 6: "One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things;" also, Eph. iii. 9: "God who created all things by Jesus Christ," (in which last passage, however, some critical editions of the Greek Testament omit the words *by Jesus Christ* as not being genuine). — Thus he who, by the divine counsels, was to redeem the world was also its Creator.

3. *Who being the brightness of his glory*; that is, the effulgence, or radiance, of the Father's glory. — The Supreme Being seems here represented as Light, or as dwelling in light, that cannot, for its splendor, be looked on. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 16: "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;" Ps. civ. 2: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." But a radiance proceeds from this light which can be beheld. The Son of God, conceived of as proceeding from the Father, is the radiance which is, so to speak, accommodated to human sight. — Compare Col. i. 15, where Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God." As the image, or likeness, of a man represents him and brings him to our apprehension, so Christ is a true representative of the Father, and through him we rightly apprehend the Father; as our Lord said, John xiv. 9: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." || *The express image of his person*; more exactly, *the impressed, or engraven, resemblance of his substance*. The word here translated *express image* means that which is *graven or stamped*, as in the case of the image, or likeness, of some person; for instance, the stamped image on a coin, as representing the sovereign, or other ruler of a country. So the Son of God is the *impress*, or *imprint* of God's

substance, an exact copy, or likeness, of God, a true expression of the divine nature. As the stamped image represents a living person, so, though in a far higher sense, the Son of God represents him and brings him to the apprehension of men. The idea is the same as in the former expression, *brightness* of the Father's glory: the Son of God is a true representative of the Father; and, as such, he has a transcendent dignity, both personal and official. — || *Upholding all things by the word of his power*. The universe which was created by the agency of the Son is also sustained by him. The worlds are dependent on him for their being upheld, as well as originally for their creation: by him, Col. i. 17, all things consist. The *word*, or command, which he utters for the sustaining of the universe proceeds from and is followed by the requisite *power*; for this power is inherent in him; so that what he speaks is done, what he commands stands fast. Compare Matt. xi. 27, xxviii. 18. || *When he had by himself purged our sins*; or, as more nearly resembling the most approved copies of the original, *having himself made a purification of sins*; that is, having himself, in his own person, made expiation for sins, so that we might be cleansed from their defilement, be freed from guilt and punishment, and be admitted to favor with God. — Sin brings moral defilement: when the sinner is pardoned and his guilt removed, he is regarded as cleansed; he can be looked on with favor by the holy God. Christ made this expiation by his death, and all who receive Christ as their Saviour are no longer held as guilty, but are redeemed from the consequences of sin and cleansed from its defilement. Thus, we read in 1 John i. 7: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" and in Rom. iii. 25, 26: "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood . . . that he might be just and the

sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ·
 * being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Jesus made this expiation *himself*, by his own death, by becoming himself the propitiatory victim; "his own self bore our sins in his own body," 1 Pet. ii. 24. The Jewish expiations made by the priest, were, on the contrary, by means of animals offered up according to the Mosaic law. || *Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*; sat down at the right hand of God in the highest heaven. See, also, Heb. viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2. The Supreme Being is here conceived of, according to human apprehension, as seated on the throne of the universe, and the Son of God as taking a seat at his right hand, the place of highest honor and dignity, occupied only by the Messiah as partaker of the divine sovereignty. Compare Mark xvi. 19; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Ps. cx. 1. See, also, Phil. ii. 9-11. — The customs of the early orientals relative to the first-born son of a family sharing in the care and management of affairs and occupying, as well as the father, the place of power, would make it appear to the original readers of this epistle, eminently befitting that the first-begotten, the only begotten Son of God, should be associated with the Father in the supreme dominion of the universe. — Having humbled himself, agreeably to the divine will, to the endurance of an expiatory death, he is now exalted to glory and honor as Head over all things for the benefit of his followers. Eph. i. 22.

The general view, thus given, of the dignity of Jesus as THE SON OF GOD, prepared the way for asserting, without the danger of contradiction, his superiority, first, to angels, and next, to Moses. The great reverence with which the Jews universally regarded Moses, made it necessary to approach the point of his inferiority to Jesus in as guarded and advantageous a manner as possible.

4. *Being made so much better than the angels, etc.*; that is, having become so much superior to the angels as the name bestowed on him by the Father is superior to theirs. It is superiority in dignity and station on the part of Jesus which is here intended to be expressed. — The claim for Jesus of superiority to angels would be felt by the Hebrews as an asserting for him of very great dignity, since angels were held to be of a vastly high rank in the scale of being. It is worthy of note, also, that the agency of angels was employed in establishing the religion of Moses, agreeably to Acts vii. 53, and Gal. iii. 19, and their dignity reflected a dignity also on that religion. If now Jesus be seen to be superior to angels, an important point is gained in reference to the religion of Jesus as superseding the Law of Moses. — || *As he hath by inheritance obtained*; literally, *as he hath inherited*, that is, has come into possession of, or, has had bestowed on him. This shade of meaning, quite usual in the Scriptures, is necessary, because the strict meaning of *inheritance*, according to modern usage in countries like ours, cannot of course hold here, as the possession could not be at all connected with the idea of death on the part of him by whom the possession was bestowed. || *A more excellent name than they*; a more distinguished more eminent name, or title, than that of angels.

The epistle here commences the contrasts by which the Superiority of Jesus is shown, in order to confirm the wavering faith of the Hebrew Christians. The first point of contrast relates to the Superiority of Jesus to the Angels. This superiority is indicated in verse 5, by the very name, or title, bestowed on them respectively. It is shown again, in the 6th verse, by the fact that angels were required to worship the Son of God, thus reverently conceding to him

⁵ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?—

⁶ And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the

an exceeding superiority. In verses 7-14, it is still further shown by the difference between angels and the Son of God in their respective agencies, positions, and attributes.

5. *For unto which of the angels, etc.; literally, To which one of the angels.* Did God ever say to any one of the angels, Thou art my son? Angels, as an *order of beings*, are called sons of God; as in Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7. So pious men may be called sons of God; as in John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14; 1 John iii. 1, 2. But no angel in particular was ever addressed individually in language which implied, on his part, a truly filial relation to God; a relation, which would warrant the declaration, recorded in Ps. ii. 7: "This day have I begotten thee."—The precise meaning of the word translated *this day*, as here employed, will always probably be a matter of doubtful speculation. Perhaps it was not, for the immediate purpose of the writer of the epistle, particularly important, since the force of this part of the passage seems to have been in the declaration, "I have begotten thee." This declaration was signally important, as confirming the assertion, Thou art my Son, and as showing such a relation between the Father and the Son as involved sameness of nature, thus proving his entire superiority to angels.—The filial relation of the Son of God was familiar to the sacred writers; yet it was apprehended in a way which did not conflict with the real deity of the Son, since they regarded it as existing before time began and as eternal. The sonship of Jesus, however, is wrapped in mystery which will probably never be removed; but that a relationship existed between the Father and the Son in his pre-existent nature, which makes the term *Son* altogether appropriate, is according to the more obvious interpretation of Scripture. || *And again,*

I will be to him a Father, etc. Another passage of Scripture, 2 Sam. vii. 14, is brought forward in reference to the name, Son of God. In this passage, God declares himself Father of the Messiah, and the Messiah his Son. It was understood at the time this epistle was written as having, at least ultimately, a real reference to the Messiah; for the writer would not, of course, in sustaining a declaration, use a passage of Scripture in a manner which would not be acknowledged by his readers as right, or which would not favorably impress their minds. Looking beyond the primary reference of the passage to the immediate descendant of king David, and thence to his posterity in the regal line, he employed it at once in its ultimate application to the great Son of David, who was in a far higher sense than any of David's descendants, the Son of God; and this application of the passage would meet the assent of all his readers.

6. *And again, when he bringeth in, etc.* Passing now from the distinguished name, Son of God, as indicating a superiority to angels, the writer argues this superiority also from the fact that when the Son was introduced into the world in order to set up the kingdom, or reign, of God, the angels were required to pay homage to him, thus reverently acknowledging him as their superior. *When he bringeth in; more correctly, When he brought in.* || *The first-begotten; literally, the first-born.* The Son of God is evidently meant. The term *first-born* includes the idea of sonship, which is here the prominent one; it is also significant not only of priority of existence, but also of dignity. Compare Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15; Ps. lxxxix. 27. God, having introduced the first-born into the world, saith: "And let all the angels of God worship him." As the citations in this

world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. —⁷ And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. ⁸ But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. ⁹ Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of

epistle from the Old Testament are throughout made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Septuagint Greek version, the passage here cited was drawn from the Greek version of Deut. xxxii. 43, where, in the Vatican edition, the very words here cited are found. The application of this passage to the Son of God was unquestionably held by the Jews; so that the use made of it would at once receive the assent of the original readers of the epistle. — The present Hebrew text of Deut. xxxii. 43, does not, indeed, contain a clause corresponding to the citation, and consequently the clause is not found in our English version of Deuteronomy; but the Hebrew text used by the Septuagint translators may have had the corresponding clause; and through the vicissitudes to which even the sacred Scriptures have been subject, it may have lost its place. It was evidently held by the Jews as Sacred Writ, when this epistle was composed, and is in harmony with the completed revelation of the divine will. — Some writers maintain that the passage cited is Ps. xevii. 7, translated in our version, "Worship him, all ye gods;" in place of which we find in the Septuagint Greek version, used by the writer of this epistle, "Worship him, all ye his angels." But the *form* of the citation is scarcely reconcilable with this opinion. — A partial illustration of this adoration of the Son of God by the angels is probably found in the praises uttered by "a multitude of the heavenly host" at his birth, as related in Luke ii. 8-14. Compare Rev. v. 11-14.

7. *And of the angels he saith*, etc. He now proceeds to the third proof of the superiority of the Son to the

angels; namely, the diverse terms which are used concerning angels and the Son of God respectively, as indicating their positions, their agencies, and their attributes. — Concerning the angels, the Scripture saith, *Who maketh his angels spirits*, etc.; more correctly, *Who maketh his angels winds*, and his ministers *a flame of fire*, that is, *lightning*. However elevated in rank the angels are, they are only, like the other created agencies of nature, ministers, or servants, to do the bidding of God; and they do it promptly. They go readily and swiftly on the errands of God, like winds and lightning; they occupy merely the place of servants ever ready to perform the tasks assigned them. — The passage is quoted from Ps. civ. 4, where also the word *winds* is preferable to *spirits*, and such a translation would be in harmony with the original language.

8, 9. *But unto the Son*, etc.; more correctly, *concerning the Son*, he saith, etc. While angels are spoken of as servants of God, and are employed as are the ordinary agencies of nature, far different language is used concerning *the Son*. Quoting from Ps. xlv. 6, 7, the writer maintains that the Son is addressed as God, as a King enthroned and having an everlasting dominion; as reigning in perfect righteousness; and as enjoying a condition of bliss incomparably beyond that of all who have shared in the honors of royalty. || *A sceptre of righteousness*, etc. A sceptre was anciently an emblem of royalty; the Messiah's sceptre is swayed in rectitude; his government is a perfectly righteous one. || *Therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness*; or, according to the judgment of some

gladness above thy fellows.—¹⁰ And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. ¹¹ They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; ¹² and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.—¹³ But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? ¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

distinguished grammatical authorities, *Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee*, etc.—Among the Orientals, to anoint a friend, or guest, with precious oil at his reception, was indicative of welcome and of respect, and, of course, contributed much to the pleasurable of a festive occasion. Hence, as also from its fragrance, the oil might well be called *oil of gladness*. Accordingly, when God is said to have anointed his Son with the oil of gladness, the meaning is that he bestowed on him special honor and blessing. || *Above thy fellows*; that is, *above*, or *beyond*, *thy fellow-kings*. In the fact of having a royal name and position, earthly kings are associates with the Messiah; but the glory and bliss of the Messiah are incomparably beyond those of any earthly king.

10–12. *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning*, etc. Still further, as showing the eminent dignity of the Son of God, as compared with the angels, the writer applies to him the declarations in Ps. cii. 25–27, as being the Lord who founded the earth and framed the heavens, and who will ever, amid the decay and perishing of these created things, abide the same and imperishable. || *As a vesture shalt thou fold them up*, etc. Like a worn-out mantle, the heavens shall grow old and pass away, as if laid aside and useless. But change and decay can never come over the Son of God; he is always, forever, the same.—In conformity with the 2d verse of this chapter and passages there referred to, the creation of the universe is here ascribed to the

Son of God; and this great fact of his being the Creator seems to have carried with it the possession of all divine attributes, and, therefore, to admit of the application of this entire passage to him, in which he is also represented as beyond the liability to decay and change.

13, 14. The diversity in the terms used concerning the Son of God and angels respectively is further shown by a quotation from Ps. cx. 1, and by the acknowledged employments of angels. In the passage quoted, Jehovah invites the Son to partnership in the divine throne, and promises him universal dominion.—*Sit on my right hand*, etc. See on verse 3. || *Until I make*, etc. The enemies of the Son of God shall not prevail against him; they shall all be subjugated; they shall all be put under his feet.

14. *Are they not all ministering spirits*, etc. In contrast with the regal dignity of the Son, and with his sitting at the right hand of the Father, angels are spirits engaged in ministries, as servants of the sovereign Lord, in behalf of those who are to be saved. The difference is that between a king at the right hand of God, and the servants who are to obey the orders and execute the designs of that king.

Thus the pre-eminent superiority of the Son to the angels is established by the name assigned to him, by the requisition from the angels of worship to him, and by the disparity in the language concerning the Son and angels respectively, as to station, employment, and attributes.

CHAPTER II.

¹ THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. ² For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; ³ how shall we escape

CHAPTER II.

The pre-eminence of THE SON as the Head of the new dispensation being established, an exhortation now follows grounded on that fact, and sustained by the vastly greater authority of his dispensation than of that of Moses; also, by the heavier condemnation which disobedience to him incurs, than disobedience to the law of Moses incurred, the law which was communicated by angels, beings so inferior to him, vs. 1-4. — This exhortation is enforced by the consideration that God subjected the new dispensation, not to angels, but to THE MAN who, after being in a state of inferiority to angels, has been crowned with glory and honor in heaven and made supreme over all things. Vs. 5-9. — The propriety of this humiliation of the Son of God to the tempted, suffering and mortal condition of human nature, as preliminary to his complete official investiture and final exaltation, is then pointed out. Vs. 10-18.

1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed; on account of the pre-eminence of the Son of God, above the angels, we ought to give heed the more earnestly to the things which we have heard, that is, to the things which we have heard from him, the instructions of the gospel as distinguished from the law of Moses.* || *Lest at any time we should let them slip; or, more literally, lest we should carelessly glide by, and miss of the blessings which they offer.*

2. *For if the word spoken by angels, etc. The word spoken by angels here means the body of instructions in the Mosaic code of religion, or the law of Moses, which the Jews held to have*

been imparted through angels to Moses for delivery to the people. Thus, in Acts vii. 53, the Hebrews are said to have received the law by *the disposition*, or the arrangements, of angels; and in Gal. iii. 19, the law is said to have been *ordained*, arranged, set completely in order, by angels. — The presence of angels at the giving of the law is not, indeed, mentioned in the account of this transaction recorded in Ex. xx. 1, 19, 22; but that their agency was held to be employed on the occasion of the delivery of the law to Moses, appears not only from the above-quoted passages in Acts and Galatians, but also from the Septuagint Greek translation, or paraphrase rather, of Dent. xxxiii. 2, which reads: "At his right hand were angels with him;" and from the statement of Josephus, the Jewish historian, in his Antiquities, xv. 5. 3: "We have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines, and the most holy part of our law, by angels." — || *A just recompense of reward; more simply, a just recompense, or requital.* Reference is here had, of course, to the sure punishment which followed acts of disobedience to the Mosaic law.

3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect, etc.* The writer, here, by a common figure of speech, associates himself with those whom he addresses, in order to gain more ready access to their hearts. The Hebrews here addressed, though professedly believers in Jesus, still needed to be cautioned against neglecting the instructions and promises of the gospel and allowing its blessings to slip from their grasp. — The blessings of the gospel are lost through *neglect* as well as through determined hostility to it. Indifference to divine truth is a deadly foe to

if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; ⁴ God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

the soul. Compare Rev. iii. 16. || *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord*, etc. Which at its beginning was declared by the Lord Jesus himself, and came to us confirmed by those who had heard him. — It is believed by some, that the writer here classes himself among those who had not personally known and heard the Lord Jesus, but had received from our Lord's personal hearers their knowledge of the gospel. Others are of the opinion, that the writer, though he may really have had personal knowledge of Jesus, here associates himself, as a writer, or a preacher, often does, with the company he is addressing, in order to impart greater familiarity to his discourse, and to cherish the fraternal feeling on the part of his readers or hearers. This manner of speech, then, is not decisive as to the authorship of the epistle.

4. *God also bearing them witness.* The word *them* was inserted by our translators, as appears by the Italic letters, having no corresponding word in the original; but it is unnecessary. The idea is, that in addition to the personal teachings of Jesus at the beginning of the gospel, and the confirmation by those who had heard him, God bore a joint testimony to the truth of the evangelical announcements by the miracles which were wrought and the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. || *Signs and wonders*, etc. These various terms are accumulated rather for showing the abundance of the attestations which were given from above and for the sake of impression, than as discriminating between different kinds of mighty deeds. The *gifts of the Holy Spirit* may also relate to the *power* of doing all these mighty works, since, in 1 Cor. xii. 4-11, all special and miraculous attesta-

tions to the truth of the Christian religion are traced to the Holy Spirit. || *According to his own will.* It was of his good pleasure that God granted all these spiritual influences; and consequently those influences and the mighty deeds produced by them, manifest clearly the sanction of God to the gospel of Christ.

The gospel, thus introduced and established by the Son of God, and divinely attested by so many and various wonderful works, claims acceptance from all men, and cannot be neglected but at extreme peril.

5. The exhortation in the preceding four verses is, in the following paragraph, further enforced by the consideration that, not to *angels* who had held a chief place in the giving of the Mosaic law, did God subject the gospel dispensation; but that he made quite a different arrangement, and subjected it to a certain MAN, — to THAT MAN in whom a remarkable passage of Scripture must be found verified in all its fulness and exactness. THE MAN to whom the inspired description thus applies, can be no other than the Messiah, since so complete a dominion is promised to him that *all things* are put in subjection to him, and that even his enemies are to be made his footstool. And since this description is realized in Jesus, it is to him that the new dispensation is subjected, and to him, consequently, as its Head, we must look for its blessings. — Thus far, the writer has avoided the declaration that it is *Jesus* who was originally the Son of God; now, however, having carefully prepared the way, his purpose requires him to claim for Jesus this dignity. He is aiming, in a somewhat circuitous manner, to set before the minds of the Hebrews an impressive view of Jesus as THE MAN

⁵ For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. ⁶ But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful

in whom correct ideas of the promised Messiah are, and will hereafter be still more, realized. And by this course he advantageously presents the Messiah, who is THE SON OF GOD, as also a SON OF MAN, that is, a MAN. — || *For*. This word introduces an enforcement of the exhortation in the preceding four verses, by urging the fact that the Messianic dispensation, the new order of things which had so long been hoped for, with its great spiritual and eternal blessings, had been put in subjection to Jesus; and, consequently, it is by being his followers that we are to obtain the promised blessings. || *Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection*; unto the angels, inferior beings, who are themselves under subjection. — The old, or Mosaic, dispensation was regarded as bestowed through the agency of angels; and they were, therefore, in an important sense at its head. Not so, however, with the new, the Messianic, dispensation: God had appointed as its head one far superior, originally, to them, indeed, the Lord of angels, but who, for the wisest purposes, had become somewhat inferior to them and who was again exalted to superiority over them, and to dominion over all things. || *The world to come*. This is one of the phrases by which the Messiah's dispensation, the system of grace for the salvation of men as distinguished from the law of Moses, was designated *before* it was introduced, and the phrase seems to have continued in use *after* the coming of Christ. It embraced the time subsequent to the appearing of Christ, extending indefinitely into the future, and including endless duration, eternity. See the remarks on i. 2. || *Whereof we speak*; of which the writer of the epistle was here speaking. The new dispensation was, in reality, the theme, or subject of this epistle.

6. *But one in a certain place testified,*

etc. See Ps. viii. 4-6. According to his custom in this epistle, a custom with which his original readers were familiar by the usage of Jewish writers and teachers, and the propriety of which was universally conceded, the writer selects the verses which he can appropriately employ, and regards them as having their ultimate and exact fulfilment only in the Messiah. — It seems to have been a general rule to regard, as relating to the Messiah, any passages of sacred writ which, in their literal fulness and exactness, corresponded to him, or were thus fulfilled in him, as well as passages directly and originally pointing to him. If, also, a passage, by a construction additional to its primary and direct meaning, found a fulfilment in the Messiah, it was regarded as having, by the divine intention, a variety and fulness of meaning which included its reference to the Messiah; and such passages, probably, carried peculiar conviction to Jewish minds. The passage quoted is accordingly taken as containing language signally applicable to the Messiah. That, in the fulness of its meaning, it pointed to the Messiah, appears also from 1 Cor. xv. 27. Compare Eph. i. 22. Taken in this fulness of meaning, it brings to view A MAN who is an object of singular affection to God; whom God placed in a condition somewhat below that of angels; whom he had, nevertheless, subsequently crowned with glory and honor, and to whom he had subjected all things. This language is also, in the usage of this epistle, to be understood with *literal* exactness; so that, when it is said that *all things* are put in subjection under his feet, the meaning is that *not one* thing is excepted. — Of course, the limitation expressed in 1 Cor. xv. 27, is here taken for granted; namely, "He is excepted, who did put all things under him." — Now, since all these circumstances meet in Jesus, he must be

of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? ⁷ Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: ⁸ thou hast put all things in subjec-

THAT MAN to whom God has made subject *the world to come*, that is, the new dispensation; and it is only through him, as being that man, that the blessings of the new dispensation can be obtained.

The main points here presented the writer proceeds to show as fulfilled in Jesus. He acknowledges, without hesitation and in the way of concession, that we do *not yet* see all things put under him; but at the same time asserts that we do see him, having been, in the form of man, made somewhat lower than angels, now crowned with glory and honor on account of the death which he endured while in his state of inferiority to angels. The use of the expression *not yet* implies the thought that the complete subjection of all things to him will hereafter take place; and his actual exaltation to glory, after his suffering of death, may even now be taken as an assurance, or pledge, that the subjection will in due time be brought about. Compare x. 13, where he is mentioned as henceforth expecting, waiting, till his enemies shall be made his footstool. — This view is in harmony with the statement in 1 Cor. xv. 24–28, that the subjection of all things to him is to be completed *at the end*; at which epoch the design of the mediatorial reign having been accomplished, that reign will cease. — || *Man . . . son of man*. These two expressions are here equivalent. || *Art mindful of him . . . visitest him*; rememberest him in kindness, and shovest a care for him. God is said to *visit* men both in mercy when he sends relief and aid, as in Luke i. 68, 78; vii. 16; and in judgment, when he inflicts punishment, as in Ps. lxxxix. 33; Jer. xiv. 10.

7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels*; that is, a little lower in the scale of being. — In the psalm from which the quotation is made, the

8th, man's being placed a little below the angels is expressive of the great dignity which his Creator had accorded to him. As used in the present connection, however, it is intended to express inferiority of position, the state of humiliation which was appointed for the Son of God, in which he might perform the work of expiation. — This is an instance in which the sacred writer seems to find in a passage of Scripture not only more than at first appears in it, but also a sense quite diverse from its original and primary sense, yet a sense which the language easily bears; and its capability of bearing this sense, as well as the other, might make it more impressive and convincing to the Jewish mind, as showing fulness and diversity of application. It was taken as very specially applicable to the case in hand, and applicable in literal exactness; and in *literal* exactness having its verification solely in Jesus. We, of so different an age and quarter of the world, and with habits of thought so different from those of the Orientals, may not require an argument, or an illustration, of this nature; but the writer of this epistle, himself most intimately acquainted with the Jewish mind and aiming to fortify Jewish readers, would, of course, adapt himself to their tendencies, in which also he participated. To us, the *results* at which he was aiming are to be objects of main consideration, while the mode of argument, or illustration, or the processes of any kind by which he led his original readers to the results, are of comparatively minor consideration. — || *Thou crownedst him with glory and honor*. In applying this clause, the writer has in view the glory in heaven to which Jesus was exalted after his death and resurrection; though originally the dignity of man, as lord of this earthly sphere, was intended.

tion under his feet. — For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for

8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* This clause in the psalm was originally meant to show, in a general manner, the dominion which man was to exercise over the inferior creation, the irrational orders of being on earth. But in applying it to Jesus, the writer of the epistle gives it a strictly literal meaning, as is also done in 1 Cor. xv. 27, extending the idea of *all things* to everything absolutely, with the sole exception of God, the Supreme. || *For in that he put all in subjection under him,* etc. This sentence contains the argument by which the writer confirms the view commenced in the 5th verse, that God did not subject the new dispensation to angels, but to **THAT MAN**, who has been described. The argument may be stated thus: Since *all things* have been subjected to him, — a declaration, which could not be applicable to angels, — the new dispensation, being included in this universal declaration, had been subjected to him; and hence, to his instructions and requirements we must give diligent heed, since from him, as the Head of the new dispensation, is to come our final award. || *But now we see not yet all things put under him;* as yet, however, we do not see *all things* actually subjected to him. — This was eminently true at the time when this epistle was written. False religions were still prevailing in the world, and wickedness still held general sway; powers hostile to Jesus were still active in their opposition to him, and his decided friends were, in comparison, few. He held, indeed, the position of an expectant conqueror, rather than of an actual conqueror, so far as complete and final conquest is concerned. But though *all things* were *not yet* brought under subjection to him, in due time the expected issue would come, when every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under

the earth, and every tongue acknowledge him as Lord. From the nature of the case, this result is still future; but it is no less certain because future; and even now we may rest assured that it will take place, because the preliminaries to it are actually in operation, as is expressed in the next verse. — Compare x. 13, where Christ, exalted to the right hand of God, is represented as *expecting, awaiting*, the subjugation of his enemies. When that takes place, *all things* will indeed be in subjection to him.

9. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory,* etc. The idea here may be expressed in the following manner: — But we do see him who had been brought down to a state somewhat lower than that of angels, namely Jesus, now, on account of his suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. — He came down to this low condition of humanity so that he might be capable of suffering death; a death, however, which was the appointed preliminary to his exaltation to glory, and which by the grace of God he was to taste in behalf of mankind; the design of which death, too, required that, in order to its efficacy, it should be followed by his exaltation to glory. Both the humiliation of Christ and his exaltation were necessary in order that his death might avail for the great purpose of human salvation. — The evidence that Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God is not here stated, since it would at once occur to the original readers of the epistle. His well-attested resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, agreeably to his promise, John xvi. 7; Acts i. 4, 8; and all the miraculous deeds of the apostles and the wonderful interpositions of God in favor of the followers of Jesus, constituted a body

the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. ¹⁰ For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory,

of evidence for his exaltation which to a candid mind must have been irresistible. — || *For the suffering of death.* In our common translation, this clause is, by the insertion of the comma, connected with the preceding words as giving a reason why Jesus was made a little lower than the angels; but the collocation of words in the original makes it sufficiently clear that this clause should be connected with the words *crowned with glory and honor*; the suffering of death being the ground on which the exaltation of Jesus to glory was made to rest. He was crowned with glory and honor *for*, that is, *on account of, the suffering of death.* This death, to be succeeded by exaltation to the right hand of God, he suffered, that he might taste death for the benefit of mankind. He was exalted to glory, also, that this purpose of his death might be surely accomplished. — || *That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.* Not that every man should actually experience the saving efficacy of the death of Jesus and enjoy the everlasting benefits which it procures; but that by his death, undergone for men as a sinful race, every man's spiritual necessities should be amply provided for, so "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16; that is, that every man, of whatsoever nation, or people, or class, and however sinful, who should become a disciple of Jesus, heartily accepting him as the Saviour, should be saved; for "he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2; iv. 14; and "the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe," 1 Tim. iv. 10. Compare John iii. 16-19. — That the death of Jesus in behalf of man was an appointment *by the grace of God*, that is, by his loving kindness and favorable regard for men,

is the current teaching of the New Testament. See John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; viii. 32; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 7; 1 John iii. 16; iv. 9, 10.

10-18. The writer has thus far shown that Jesus, being the Son of God, is transcendently *superior to angels*; also, that he is *THAT MAN* to whom God subjected all things without exception, so far as created things are concerned; and this is a dignity which, of course, involves his elevation above angels, since they, as well as all other created beings and things, are put in subjection to him.

He now proceeds to maintain *the propriety* of the arrangement by which he, who, as the author of salvation, was to lead numerous sons of God to glory, should himself be conducted to his station of perfect glory at the right hand of God through sufferings, and even the suffering of death.

10. *For it became*; it was manifestly suitable and proper. || *Him for whom are all things*, etc; that is, God, for whose glory and by whose power all things were created and are upheld. Compare Rev. iv. 11. See, also, Rom. xi. 36: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." || *In bringing many sons unto glory.* The word translated *in bringing* relates, grammatically, in the original, to the word translated *captain*. — The idea of this passage is as follows: — He who was the captain, the leader, of their salvation was conducting many sons to glory; and it was evidently proper that in conducting to glory these sons of God, who were frail, suffering, mortal men, he himself, their leader, should attain the height of his perfected state, in like manner, through sufferings. For both he and they were all from one Father; so that he acknowledged them as his brethren; he could, therefore, sympathize with them and furnish appropriate succor in the difficulties and temptations

to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are

which they must encounter. It was clearly a befitting arrangement, that between the children of God whom he was to conduct to glory and himself there should be sameness of nature and experience. — The word rendered *Captain* in this verse is elsewhere rendered *Prince*, Acts iii. 15; v. 31; and *Author*, Heb. xii. 2. The idea of *leader* is here appropriate, since the thought of *conducting, bringing on the way*, is evidently the prominent one. — This verse cannot be translated in strict correspondence to the original, on account of the difference in idiom between the Greek language and our own. It may, however, be correctly represented in the following manner: — *For it became him, on whose account are all things, and by whom are all things, to perfect, by means of sufferings, him who, as the captain of their salvation, was leading many sons to glory. || To make . . . perfect.* The word thus translated is singularly comprehensive. The idea of *perfection, or completeness*, is inherent in it; but the kind of perfection, or completeness, intended, is indicated by the connection in which the word stands. It does not, here, relate to perfection of *holiness*, since Jesus always possessed this; but to perfection of *state, or condition*; namely, his being crowned with glory and honor, as stated in the 9th verse. And it is here asserted as suitable, that as he was to lead to glory the sons of God, who must attain to this glory through the discipline of sufferings, he himself should be raised to his own perfect glory through sufferings. Thus, as is afterwards explained, in verses 14–18, there would be similarity of experience between them and him, conducing to sympathy on his part and confidence in him on theirs. And as not only the result of *being glorified* was to be attained, but also a corresponding fitness for that result by having completely performed his official work, so the sufferings through which he was to pass would conduce, on his part, to perfectness of

official qualification; while the sufferings which his people must endure conduce mainly to their *moral* fitness for heavenly glory; that is, to their becoming mature in piety. || *Many sons*; that is, many sons of God. The word *many* is here used in a sense which comprehends *all* the numerous sons of God who were to be led to glory. This designation of pious men as sons of God would seem to be here used as making the propriety of this arrangement more obvious; it was *THE SON OF GOD* who was leading to glory many *sons of God*; hence, it was evidently proper that he should, in order to secure this result, be reduced, for a certain period, to the level of the nature of the sons whom he was appointed to save.

11. *For, etc.* The propriety that there should be, on the part of him who was to lead suffering sons of God to glory, the same capability of suffering as on their part, is now particularly dwelt on. This appropriateness is grounded on the fact that he and they, — he, the expiator, procuring redemption from punishment, and they, those for whom expiation is made, and who are, by virtue of it, made holy, — are all of one Father, and between them and him the fraternal relation exists. Since, then, these children of God whom he was to lead to glory are subjected to suffering and death as partakers of flesh and blood, he also became a partaker of flesh and blood, and thus became liable to suffering and death, so that he might subvert the deadly power of Satan, and deliver the children of God from the bondage to which the fear of death had subjected them. Moreover, by partaking of their suffering and mortal nature, he could become a high-priest for them, to atone for their sins and give them aid in their temptations. — || *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified.* The original word for *sanctify* has frequently in the Scripture the sense of *consecrating, or setting apart*, persons or things for the

sanctified *are* all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren ; ¹² saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. ¹³ And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

service of God. In reference to persons it has the sense of *setting them apart* by means of certain acts significant of the removal of their sins. — In the usage of the New Testament, the idea of *holy character* in the sight of God is associated with that of being *set apart* for his service, or *consecrated* to him. — In the present passage it is Jesus who *sanctifies*, or does that by virtue of which certain persons are set apart as holy and are accepted of God; they who *are sanctified*, or thus set apart and accepted, are his followers. It is by his death, also, that they are released from the guilt of sin and brought into favor with God, as appears from Heb. x. 10, 14, 29; xiii. 12. The clause might, therefore, so far as the sense is concerned, be rendered, *For both he that expiath and they for whom expiation is made.* There is a striking agreement between this clause and the idea in the passage, i. 3, where our purification from sin is ascribed to Jesus. — The Hebrews had become accustomed, through their Greek translation of the Old Testament, to the use of the word here rendered *sanctify*, as expressive of an effectual expiation followed by consecration to God. In Job i. 5, the word *sanctified* illustrates this meaning. Job is said to have *sanctified* his children by offering up burnt-offerings as an expiation for the sins which they might have committed. || *Are all of one*; that is, *from one Father*, namely, God. He is the Father of those who need salvation, and of him who effects salvation for them; Matt. vi. 9; John xx. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; and because they and he have one and the same Father, it is suitable that both he and they should be exalted to glory through a similar course of treatment.

The common Father of the Redeemer and the redeemed sees fit, since the redeemed must undergo the preparatory discipline of sufferings, to appoint sufferings for the Redeemer also. || *For which cause he is not ashamed*, etc.; on which account, that is, because he and they proceed from one and the same Father, he willingly regards them as his brethren.

12. *Saying, I will declare thy name*, etc. This quotation is from Ps. xxii. 22; a psalm descriptive of the Messiah. || *In the midst of the church.* In the verse here cited, the word corresponding to *church* is, in our version of the Psalms, *congregation*. Either of these words sufficiently represents the Greek term, which is significant of an assembly.

13. *And again, I will put my trust in him.* The equivalent expression is found in 2 Sam. xxii. 3, and Ps. xviii. 2. This passage, regarded as a declaration made by Christ, indicates his brotherhood with all the children of God, both he and they alike putting their trust in their common Father. The sameness between him and them in point of nature, so that he may own them as his brethren, is shown by their being alike dependent on God and their alike cherishing reliance on him. || *And again, Behold, I and the children*, etc. These words are quoted from Is. viii. 18. As God had, for a special purpose, given certain children to the prophet Isaiah, so he had given to Christ the many sons of God to be atoned for and conducted to glory by him. Compare John vi. 37, 39; xvii. 2, 9–12. As these sons of God and himself were of one and the same Father, he acknowledged them as his brethren. — The clause cited from Isaiah would happily express the relation which Christ sustained to the redeemed

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the

children of God, he being their appointed Head, the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. The use here made of the clause was in accordance with Jewish practice, and would at once be acceded to by those for whom the epistle was primarily intended.

14. *Forasmuch then as the children, etc.* Having thus presented to his readers the company of the redeemed in the capacity of a family of children, the writer states the fact that he who was to be the Head of that family assumed the same nature as the children composing it. As they were constituted of flesh and blood, that is, were human, so he himself became a partaker with them in the elements of human nature and thus became susceptible of death.—The expression, *flesh and blood*, signifies *human nature*, rational as well as bodily; as, when our Lord said to his disciple Peter, Matt. xvi. 17, "*Flesh and blood*," that is, any human being, "*hath not revealed it unto thee*;" and the apostle Paul to the Galatians, Gal. i. 16, "*I conferred not with flesh and blood*;" that is, with any human being. As the body is the visible man, so flesh and blood represent the whole man. || *That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, etc.*; that by means of his submitting to death he might reduce to nought, might render powerless, him that has [not had] the power of death, that is, the devil.—The present tense, *has*, more correctly expresses the original.—According to views which prevailed among the ancient Hebrews, death was shrouded with terror, and Satan, the foe of God and of man, was regarded as the angel, or prince, of death, and as having power to inflict it. The account in the first and second chapters of Job shows that diseases and death were traced to Satan's agency, and that he was held to be the inflicter of death, subject, how-

ever, to the supreme will and power of God. This view, modified, of course, by the rising light of the gospel, would seem to have continued among the early followers of Christ. Moreover, as the terribleness of death consists not in the physical event, but in the righteous and irreversible retribution to which it conducts the sinful soul under the judgment of God, 1 Cor. xv. 56, Satan may well be regarded as *having the power of death*, since he is eminently the tempter of men to sin, just as he was the tempter of our first parents, and had an agency in bringing them and their race to death. This malign power of Satan in leading men into sin, thus involving them in guilt and making the event of death so terrible to them, is frequently referred to in the New Testament. He deceives men and effects their ruin, Rev. xii. 9; xx. 3; Acts v. 3; Eph. ii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 26. He hinders the progress of the gospel and puts impediments in the way of piety and Christian joy, Rom. xvi. 17-20; 1 Thess. ii. 18; Rev. ii. 10; xii. 10. He blinds men to the glories of heaven and the excellence of the gospel, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He has been "a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44. Satan, then, has at least an indirect agency in the infliction of death, and in making the anticipation of it a source of so much fearful apprehension.—*That he might destroy, etc.*; that he might make powerless him that has swayed so deadly a power. The idea here intended is kindred with that conveyed in 1 Cor. xv. 26: "The last enemy, even death, shall be destroyed;" and is substantially the same as in 2 Tim. i. 10: "Jesus Christ . . . who hath abolished death;" that is, hath rendered it powerless, brought it to nought. Whatever power Satan has in blinding the minds of men, in seducing them to habitual sin, and in bringing them to a miserable death,

power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵ and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to

this power Christ has rendered ineffective in regard to his followers. They are rescued from it by the great Deliverer who came to destroy, to break up, the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. — Our Lord annulled the deadly power of Satan, by means of *death*, since his death was an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world; by its virtue, the guilt of those who are united to him by faith is removed, forgiveness is granted to them, and acceptance with God, now and hereafter, is secured. For them the dreadfulness of death is removed; and they are warranted to look on it, not as a punishment, but only, agreeably to the idea of the distinguished commentator, Alford, as the passage for them, as it was for Jesus himself, to a new and glorious life of triumph and blessedness. To the believer in Christ, then, death is no longer the king of dread. It is no longer invested with gloom, when viewed in the light of the instructions, the death, resurrection, and ascension, of Jesus; its sting is extracted, and the grave no longer has victory. "O death, where is now thy sting? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. Let believers but welcome to their souls the great truth that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, 1 John ii. 2; that he died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 6; and admit, with all their fulness, the great ideas of life and immortality which Jesus has made so prominent and lucid, and which he has stamped with the seal of certainty, and they will no longer conceive of death as a harassing, malignant power.

15. *And deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime, etc.* The form of expression here used in the original indicates that reference is had not to a few believers in Jesus, whose constitutional timidity, or melancholy turn of mind, or inadequate view of the Saviour's expiation and of the pardoning mercy of God, does not allow them deliverance from harassing

fears of death; but to the entire class of pious men. Men, in general, through their conscious sinfulness and desert of divine wrath, are enslaved by fear of death; and even the pious, in ages preceding the coming of Christ, were usually not disenthralled from that bondage. For down to the time of the actual death of Christ, truly pious men were, for the most part, through lack of New Testament ideas, destitute of that freedom from the fear of death which has so distinctly marked the experience of believers in him. His expiatory death, taking away their guilt, and the knowledge of that death, was necessary to true peace of mind, and the freedom of a filial spirit towards God. Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 4-6. By his becoming a partaker of their mortal nature and by his death in their behalf, he would annul for all the children of God the power of death and deliver them from those painful apprehensions which are inseparable from an obscure view of God's pardoning mercy, but which are dissipated by an intelligent, hearty faith in Christ. — The gloomy and distressing views to which even pious men of former ages were liable, and from which Jesus delivers his followers, may be correctly apprehended by examining such passages as Ps. vi. 5, "In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Ps. xxx. 9, "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?" Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12, "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?" Ps. cxv. 17, "The dead praise not the Lord;" Is. xxxvii. 18, "The grave cannot praise thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." In contrast with these and as showing the clear and joyful light which Jesus has shed on the future state of his followers, see Luke xxiii. 43, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" 1 Cor. xv. 35-37; 2

bondage. ¹⁶ For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷ Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like

Cor. iv. 14-18; v. 1-8; Phil. i. 23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;" 1 Thess. iv. 13, 18; 2 Tim. i. 10.

16. *For verily he took not on him*, etc. This verse in our common translation, which encombors it with an addition in Italian words, fails to exhibit the real thought of the original, and even forestalls the succeeding verse, thus causing a degree of tautology. It really, in the original, gives a reason why the Son of God became a partaker of human nature, as stated in the 14th verse; and may be thus translated:—*For verily it is not of angels that he takes hold; that is, to deliver them; but it is of the seed of Abraham that he takes hold.* Angels need no such aid; they are not mortal; they are not in bondage through fear of death. But it is men, mortal, sinful, death-fearing men, whom he interposed to deliver. Eminently proper, then, for the Son of God, when he would become a leader of salvation to men, is this ability to abolish the power of death over men, by means of his partaking, jointly with them, of human nature and by suffering death himself. || *The seed of Abraham.* The contrast here made between the seed of Abraham and *angels* shows that it was not the seed of Abraham in a national point of view that was intended; but *the seed of Abraham* as representative of *mankind*, or, at least, of believers among all nations of men.—As this epistle was sent to *Hebrew* believers, who were lineal descendants of Abraham, it was natural that their outward relation to Abraham, particularly as they were, also, through faith in Jesus, his spiritual posterity, should occur to the writer's mind, and give form to his expression. Moreover, by using this expression, he would remind his readers of Abraham's faith, and of his being the father of believers, Rom. iv.

11, 12. The expression would, also, include the entire company of believers of whatever nation, as would appear from Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16, 17; also, Gal. iii. 7, They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham; Gal. iii. 9, 14, 29, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Obviously, not the natural descendants of Abraham, *as such*, are meant, but his spiritual posterity, believers, the redeemed through faith in Jesus.—Perhaps, too, those of the natural posterity of Abraham, who had, also, by faith become his spiritual posterity, were regarded, agreeably to Rom. xi. 16, 17, as a primary stock into which other men were to be grafted in order to be saved, and thus all believers would constitute the seed of Abraham.

17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him*, etc. Since, then, those whom he comes to deliver are men, he ought to become like them, his brethren. *His brethren* are the numerous *sons of God* whom he was to lead to glory, verse 10, whom he acknowledged as *his brethren*, verse 11, called also, in verses 13 and 14, *the children whom God had given to him* to redeem.—*It behoved him*; literally, *he ought*; that is, on the ground of fitness and propriety he ought to be like them, similar in nature and circumstances, that he might know by experience their liabilities and necessities, and that they might, correspondingly, be attracted towards him and affectionately confide in him.—*In all things*; that is, in all things essential to their nature; also, in their liability to temptation and suffering. Sinfulness, however, is not included in these things; for sin is not an original and essential attribute of our nature. Our first parents were originally without sin; still, their nature was human; so the Son of God became a partaker of sinless human nature, with its liability

unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

to suffering and temptation. It is expressly said, in iv. 15, that Jesus was "without sin;" also, in 1 Pet. ii. 22, that he "did no sin." Though he had all those natural susceptibilities to which temptation is directed, and by which it leads men into sin, and though in consequence of his having these human susceptibilities, temptation actually assailed him, he had that strength of holy inclination and purpose which made him always completely victorious over it. Such was his perfect consciousness of being sinless that he challenged his adversaries to prove him otherwise: — "Which of you convinceth [more correctly, *convicteth*] me of sin?" John viii. 46. He was as much like his brethren of mankind as he could be without sin. || *That he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest*, etc. It was necessary that he should become like his brethren, in order that he might be a High-priest for them in their spiritual and eternal concerns, merciful in his regards for them and faithful to their interests. Thus their cause would never suffer, and all their necessities would be met with favor and aid from above. — The high-priesthood of Jesus, which is the main topic of this epistle, is thus glanced at. The writer's mind was filled with this topic. By pertinent and touching references to it beforehand, he would gradually prepare his readers for the full treatment of it to which he was conducting them. — This official relation to his people was one of the great objects had in view by the Son of God when he descended to a position a little lower than that of the angels. — || *To make reconciliation*, etc. This is the result to be obtained by his becoming a merciful and faithful High-priest; namely, to make propitiation for the sins of his people, 1 John ii. 2, so that God might be propitious to them and admit them to

his favor. — Under the Mosaic economy, it was a part of the high-priest's office to make an annual offering of the blood of a slain animal on account of the transgressions of the nation, by virtue of which offering the nation's guilt was removed, Lev. xvi. 29-34. What was thus done for the Hebrew people ceremonially, and in regard to their national state, was to be done by Jesus for his followers spiritually, and in regard to their personal relations to God. || *The people*. The connection shows that this propitiation was to be effectually made for those who are called the brethren of Jesus, the children of God given him to be redeemed; that is, the people of God.

18. *For in that he himself hath suffered*, etc. The fact that the Son of God in human nature has been personally subjected to temptations and sufferings, makes him know what it is to be tempted and to suffer, and what aid is necessary for tempted and suffering children of God. Mercy and faithfulness in a high-priest are eminently promoted by his having personal experience of the necessities and dangers of those in favor of whom he acts. These necessities and dangers the Son of God well knew, for in his state of humiliation below angels he was himself human, and endured, far beyond the experience of his people, the temptations and sufferings incident to human nature in its period of probation.

The propriety of the Son of God, so transcendently superior to angels, becoming reduced to a state somewhat inferior to theirs, is thus made evident. And then, after this humiliation and as a recompense for it, xii. 2, he was, as being the Messiah, elevated to the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor, and having the assurance that all things should, in due time, be brought into subjection

PART SECOND.

CHAPTERS III., IV.

SUPERIORITY OF JESUS CHRIST TO MOSES IN THE HOUSE, THAT IS, THE FAMILY, OF GOD.

§ Faithfulness ascribed both to Moses and to Jesus; but the position held by Christ in the family of God far more dignified than that of Moses, iii. 1-6. § Hortatory section, urging the Hebrews to make sure of the heavenly rest remaining for the people of God, iii. 7—iv. 10. § The searching nature of God's word and his perfect knowledge of us, as enforcing the exhortation, iv. 11-13. § Encouragement to steadfastness, from the compassion of our High-priest in heaven, through whom mercy and grace may be obtained, iv. 14-16.

¹ WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly

view of his superiority to the angels; namely, that which he had before he became man, and that to which, as a result of his voluntary humiliation, he was afterwards exalted. The latter view, however, namely, that which pertains to his glorified Messiah-nature, the writer's purpose did not require him to present at this stage of the epistle. This elevation to dignity and glory at the right hand of God after voluntary humiliation and suffering, is minutely set forth in Phil. ii. 9-11, and 1 Pet. iii. 18, 22.

PART II.

CHAPTERS III., IV.

SUPERIORITY OF JESUS CHRIST TO MOSES IN THE HOUSE, THAT IS, THE FAMILY, OF GOD.

The second part of the epistle presents a comparison between Jesus and Moses in respect to their fidelity and dignity in the respective positions divinely assigned to them in the house, or family, of God. Faithfulness is ascribed both to Moses and to Christ, iii. 1, 2. Christ, however, is entitled to greater honor than Moses, as being the founder and regulator of the family, iii. 3, 4. In regard to faithfulness, Christ has the superiority, because Moses acted only in the capacity of a *servant* in the family, but Christ administers its affairs as the *SON*, iii. 5, 6.—A hortatory section follows, founded on the sentiment, that believers in Christ are the people (the family) of God, and urging the necessity of persevering faith and obedience in order to obtain the heavenly rest, which is still promised to the people of God, but from which the ancient Hebrews, who were professedly his people, were debarred in consequence of their disobedience and unbelief, iii. 7-19; iv. 1-

10. This exhortation is enforced by a consideration of the penetrating quality of divine truth as addressed to men, and of the most intimate knowledge which God has even of our thoughts and purposes, iv. 11-13. Our confidence in Jesus, the Son of God and our great High-priest in heaven, is to be steadfastly maintained, since he regards us with compassion, and through him we may, coming to God with our petitions, obtain mercy and grace, iv. 14-16.

CHAPTER III.

1. *Wherefore*, etc. The preceding chapter ended with a mention of Jesus as a merciful and faithful High-priest for the people of God, to expiate for their sins, and to aid them when tempted. In view of his having been sent forth from God to men, and having become such a High-priest, the Hebrews are called on carefully to consider him as specially entitled to their abiding confidence. || *Holy brethren*. The Hebrew believers are here addressed as persons who, in consequence of the expiation which Jesus had made for their sins, ii. 11, had been delivered from the condemnation and power of sin, and had become members of God's holy family. Whatever might be the case as to *individuals* among them, yet as a *company* of avowed followers of Jesus they were separated from the ungodly world and *consecrated to God* as holy persons, and, notwithstanding their weakness and deficiencies, were, on the whole, genuine disciples of Christ. Compare vi. 9, 10; x. 32-34. The expression *holy brethren* was then,

calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profes-

both according to their profession and according to the reality, applicable to them. The terms *holy*, *saints*, *sanctified*, are repeatedly used in the New Testament as designating the followers of Christ, Acts ix. 41; Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2, since those terms are indicative of what Christians are required to be, Eph. i. 4, and of what they really are, so far as they are influenced by the gospel. All departures from holy affection and conduct are departures from the avowed obligations of Christ's disciples. || *Partakers of the heavenly calling*; that is, of the calling, or invitation, which addresses us from heaven, xii. 25, and which proposes heavenly blessings. The followers of Christ have been invited, and have accepted the invitation, to the enjoyment and the still continued pursuit of heavenly blessings. It is not earthly good to which they are specially invited, but that state of heavenly enjoyment which consists in pardon of sin, in deliverance from its power, and from an unquiet conscience, in the well-grounded hope and ultimate possession of the bliss of heaven. Of this invitation, and of the blessings proposed in it, the followers of Christ are joint partakers. — Usually, in the New Testament, the *calling*, or invitation to the blessings of the heavenly kingdom is mentioned with reference to those who have accepted it: hence, the term *the called* is a designation of *followers of Christ*; as in Rom. i. 6, 7; viii. 28; 1 Cor. i. 2, 24; Jude 1; Rev. xvii. 14. || *Consider*; give special consideration, or earnest heed; the original word being expressive of intensity. The exhortation is of the same tenor as in ii. 1, where the superiority of Christ to the angels is the ground of the exhortation. Here the exhortation is grounded on the view of Jesus as having been sent from God and having become the High-priest of his followers, and consequently deserving special regard. The Hebrews, here addressed, had been in the habit, like all the Jews, of paying special honor to Moses, the faithful servant of God and

bearer of God's messages to their forefathers: their chief regard and consideration are now claimed for Jesus. — This claim, while it did not disparage Moses in reality, yet placed him in a subordinate position, and would, in all likelihood, encounter strong prejudices, not only on the part of Jews in general, but even of Jewish believers in Christ who were vacillating in their faith. The wisdom of the writer, in putting this topic in the second place instead of putting it forth at the outset, is hence obvious; for if Christ be seen to be superior to angels, it would not be difficult for Jewish minds to acknowledge his superiority to Moses. The reasoning, then, very sagaciously commences with the higher point, and afterwards treats a comparatively low one; and thus what might seem, on a superficial view and to a modern reader, an objectionable arrangement, was by far the best adapted for gaining the assent of the original readers. || *The Apostle and High-priest of our profession*; him in whom we have professed to believe as the one sent forth from God and as our High-priest. — The primary meaning of the word *apostle* in the original is, *one who has been sent*; and it here designates Christ as him whom the Father had specially sent into the world, John x. 36; xvii. 3; xx. 21, at the closing up of the ancient dispensation, to make the final revelation of his will, i. 1, in reference to the salvation of men, ii. 3, and to lay down his life for their salvation, John x. 11, 17, 18; Heb. ii. 9. — Christ is here presented to contemplation in the twofold capacity of the *messenger*, Mal. iv. 1, sent forth from God to men, and the *High-priest*, gone up to God from among men to act in behalf of his people. The Hebrew believers, like all others, had already avowed their reception of Jesus in this twofold capacity. — It is important to bear in mind that the Hebrews addressed in this epistle were avowed believers in Jesus, since it takes for granted that its original readers did not need arguments to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, as they had al-

sion, Christ Jesus ; ² who was faithful to Him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

³ For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than

ready acted on their knowledge of his miracles and the other evidences of his divine commission. But they needed stronger faith in him, enlarged conceptions of his character and dignity, of his personal and official excellence, and of his great superiority to all whom they had been accustomed to regard with reverence. The epistle is not so much a series of *arguments*, as a series of *views* respecting Jesus, designed to cherish such a conviction in regard to him as would fortify them against the seducing influences of unbelievers who sought, through a professed respect for the authority of Moses, to disparage the claims of Jesus to religious reverence and confidence.

2. *Who was faithful to Him that appointed him*; literally, *being faithful* to Him that appointed him, that is, to God who sent him. Reference is had to faithfulness at the present time as well as in the past: Jesus was faithful to God in the work given him on earth, and is still faithful in the relation which he ever sustains to the household of God. || *As also Moses was faithful*. Moses is here acknowledged as having been faithful to the high trust which had been committed to him, relative to the Jewish household of God. While asserting the faithfulness of Jesus, the writer would by no means disparage the reputation of Moses, but would concede to him great honor. Besides acknowledging a just claim for Moses, he would thus put the minds of readers into an attitude favorable for candidly considering his view of the paramount authority of Jesus. || *In all his house*. The word *his* here refers to the phrase *Him that appointed him*, that is, God; and thus it is the house, that is, the family, of God in which Moses is pronounced to have been faithful. Compare Num. xii. 7, where the Lord said concerning Moses, "My servant Moses is faithful in all mine house," which passage the writer of the epistle, doubtless, here had in view.

3. Having claimed for Jesus fidelity in the position to which God had appointed him, and conceded to Moses fidelity in *his position*, the writer now proceeds to point out the superiority of Jesus to Moses in two particulars: 1. Christ was the founder and orderer, or furnisher, of the house of God; an honor which could by no means be claimed for Moses. 2. The fidelity of Moses was that of a chief *servant* in the family of God; while the fidelity of Christ is that of the first-born *son*. — *For*. This word is connected in sense with the word *consider* in the first verse, and introduces an additional reason for the special regard which should be paid to Jesus as compared with Moses. || *This man*; Jesus. || *Was accounted worthy*, etc.; rather, *has been accounted*, and *is still accounted*, worthy of more *glory*, that is, honor, or estimation. — According to the judgment of God and any correct view of the part which Christ has acted in the house of God, Christ is entitled to higher honor than Moses. || *Inasmuch as*, etc. The superior estimation to which Christ is entitled is indicated by the superior honor which belongs to the one who founded the house of God and furnished it with all its needful appointments, as compared with the house itself thus furnished. In somewhat similar terms, the head, or founder, of a family is worthy of more distinction than the family, since the family and all its departments of privilege and service are to be traced to him. — The word *house*, throughout this paragraph, is not to be understood as meaning *a building*, but *a household*, or, more properly, *a family*; a family subsisting through many generations, as in the case of royal, or noble, families. It is also the *house of God*, as existing and set in order under the Mosaic dispensation, and subsequently under the Christian. Under the Mosaic dispensation the family of God included the entire nation, with its array

Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. ⁴ For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.

of priests and Levites and all the arrangements for worship, and the provision for punishing, and for pardoning, transgression. The nation, thus constituting the family of God, were required to be a holy people, obedient to God, and they had covenanted with him to be such, in view both of his threatenings and of his promises. See Ex. xix. 3-8; xxiv. 1-3; Deut. xxvi. 16-19; Josh. xxiv. 14-22. Though, as a nation, they violated their covenant engagements and lost the promised blessings, they still had all the external and typical arrangements which distinguished them as the people of God, and still had promises of renewed favor on condition of penitent return to obedience. See Deut. iv. 29, xxx. 1-10. There was, also, ever among them a company of faithful children of God, who were acknowledged as his spiritual family, and to whom, in consequence of their piety, the blessing of eternal life was assured. Such was the family of God, particularly at the period soon after their deliverance from Egypt, when the statutes and ordinances from heaven were communicated through Moses. To this family Moses belonged as a member and as the chief servant in administering its affairs. || *He who hath builded the house*; rather, *he who built the house*. The original word for *builded* means, more strictly, *prepared, set in order*: the connected idea of *constructing, founding, creating*, is also conveyed by it. Here the idea seems to be that of a person *founding, or forming, or organizing*, a household, and furnishing it with all needful accompaniments, such as servants and assistants of various sorts, so as to make the establishment complete according to oriental views. || *Hath more honor than the house*. The proportional glory, or honor, here assigned to Christ and to Moses respectively, seems to involve the thought that Christ was the founder and arranger of the house here specified.

And this is in accordance with the occasional recognition in the New Testament of the agency of Christ, in his pre-existent nature, previously to his advent. Thus, the creation of the universe is ascribed to his agency in John i. 3, in Col. i. 16, in Heb. i. 2; the wonderful appearance of Jehovah to the prophet Isaiah, related in Is. vi. 1-3, is said in John xii. 41, to have been a manifestation of Christ's glory; and in 1 Cor. x. 4, 9, mention is made of Christ in a manner which best comports with the opinion that the agency of Christ in connection with the affairs of the ancient Hebrews was familiar to the apostle's mind. Christ, then, as having established the Jewish family of God and set it in order, has more honor than the family itself with all its apparatus, since the founding of it and all its arrangements are the result of his wisdom, power, and goodness. All that was good and excellent in the Jewish economy, both in itself and in its design of foreshadowing, and providing for, better things under the new dispensation, is but a reflection of the wisdom and goodness of Christ. Such honor as this could not be claimed for Moses, since he was only the servant of God in communicating to the people the divine arrangements and in administering the affairs accordingly. He did not found and furnish the house; he was a subordinate in it. — This view, if properly apprehended by the Hebrew Christians, would obviously have had much force; since it shows that the honor which they had been in the habit of ascribing to Moses, however great it was, ought really to be regarded as only a reflection of the honor which belonged to Christ as having originated and established the religious economy which Moses communicated to the nation.

4. The founder of the house of God had just been mentioned. This house had, of course, some one as its founder; *for every house is builded by some man*;

⁵ And Moses verily *was faithful in all His house as a servant*, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; ⁶ but Christ as a son over his own house;

that is, *every house is founded and furnished by some one*. The word *one*, some *one*, is preferable to the supplied word *man*; since the original word is indefinite and would be applicable to any one, whether human, angelic, or divine. Every family has some founder: consequently, this family of God had its founder; and, as appears from the preceding verse, Christ was its founder. || *But he that built all things is God*. God, however, is to be acknowledged as the universal Creator, or Founder, how true soever it be in respect to every particular household that some one had founded it. — This thought appears to have been inserted in order to forestall the supposition that the statement just made excluded the sovereign, all-comprehending, agency of God; which agency, however, the writer reminds us, is by no means overlooked in his declaration. — The founding of the household of God by Christ is to be understood as performed in his capacity of *the Son of God*, who was in due time to appear as the Messiah and Saviour.

5. The superiority of Christ to Moses in point of dignity being thus, as it were incidentally, indicated, the fidelity of Moses and Christ respectively is now resumed in order to show, in this respect also, the superiority of Christ. — *Moses verily was faithful in all His house*. Moses indeed was faithful in the whole household of God, that is, in regard to all parts of it and all the persons and things pertaining to it. || *As a servant*. Moses was put into the position of the chief servant, or steward, in the house of God. — The writer had before his mind the picture, or representation, of an oriental family with a head-servant, or steward, entrusted with the general care of its interests, and clothed with all needful authority of management and of control over the inferior servants. In families of distinction, the position was a very honorable one. || *For a testimony*, etc.; for the purpose of tes-

tifying to the people the things which should be spoken to him in order to be communicated to them for their observance. Moses was made the medium of communicating to the people the divine commands and arrangements. He did not act otherwise than as under authority, and he was to see that all things pertaining to the ritual service were done agreeably to instructions given him from above. Compare Ex. xxv. 1, 9; also verse 22, "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee . . . of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel;" also verse 40; Heb. viii. 5. Also, in Acts vii. 38, 44, Moses is said to have "received the lively oracles to give unto" the people; and God is said to have required Moses to make "the tabernacle of witness according to the fashion that he had seen" in the mount. Moses accordingly gave the directions; and the instructions received by him from time to time and communicated to the people, guided, even in the minutest particulars, the arrangements in their affairs.

6. *But Christ as a son over his own house*. The translation *his own house* is not required by the original: the rendering should be, *His house*; that is, *the house of God*. — While Moses must be acknowledged as having been faithful in his capacity of a servant in the household of God, to Christ must be conceded a far higher degree of faithfulness, as being the Son, occupying a place of authority over the family of God. Christ is denominated the First-born, the Only-begotten, Son of God. His position in this capacity was one of signal authority, illustrated as well, perhaps, as could be, yet of course inadequately, by the usage in oriental families. The eldest son in those families was admitted to a share in the dignity and power belonging to the father of the household; and nothing was done without his consent and co-operation. In some instances it would seem

whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

⁷ Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will

that *the son* gave direction to affairs, and occupied, as it were, a paternal position. See the note on i. 2. The position of Christ in the household of God was, then, one of high authority. Hence we see a reason for the different terms employed in this verse and the 5th; namely, Moses was faithful in God's house, but Christ was faithful over God's house. — || *Whose house are we.* Believers in Christ are here represented as being the household of God over which Christ presides. They are now his family, as in ancient times the truly pious among the Hebrews, or Israelites, were. And in respect to the organization, or outward state, of believers, by which they are separated from the world, Christ was the founder and orderer of it, as he was of the Jewish organized state. || *If we hold fast the confidence, etc.* Our membership in the family of God is dependent on our faith in Christ, which faith gives us a ground of joyful hope for heavenly blessings. We belong indeed to his family, if we steadfastly adhere to Christ in faith and hope. || *The rejoicing of the hope;* the rejoicing which springs from hope in Christ; or, the hope in which we rejoice. — Steadfast perseverance in Christian faith is essential to our being acknowledged by our final Judge as members of the household of God. Such is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures. See John viii. 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John xv. 6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." Compare Matt. xiii. 8, 23; xxiv. 13, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Luke xiii. 24-27; Col. i. 21-23; 2 Pet. ii. 18.

7-19, etc. The necessity of a persevering adherence to Christ, if we would be acknowledged as members of the household of God and share in the everlasting blessings to be bestowed on his children, leads the writer now into a

strain of exhortation, terminating with the 13th verse of the 4th chapter. It is grounded on the sad fate of the Israelites who perished in the wilderness, debarred from the heavenly rest, in consequence of their disbelieving the promise of God and of their disobedience. — Throughout this hortatory passage it is the thought of the *heavenly rest*, as lost by the unbelieving Israelites, with which the writer's mind was occupied; their loss of a quiet settlement in Canaan, being comparatively of so small moment and so inadequate to his purpose, is quite aside from his view, although the term *rest* was used in the Old Testament, Deut. xii. 9, 10, with reference to dwelling in the land of Canaan.

7. *Wherefore, etc.*; that is, Since we, followers of Christ, are the household of God, provided we persevere in our confident and joyful hope, etc. — Next follows a quotation from Ps. xcv. 7-11, which the writer employs as the groundwork of the exhortation to his readers to beware of unbelief and of forsaking God, lest they, like their disbelieving and disobedient ancestors, spoken of in the psalm, should fail of the promised rest in heaven. || *As the Holy Ghost saith.* It is interesting to observe here the direct ascription of the following verses to the Holy Spirit. Not only is their divine origin thus asserted, but they are also presented in a manner best adapted to make the solemn impression which the writer's purpose required. In iv. 7, God is said to have spoken these words in and through David. See also Acts i. 16. — The quotation, with nearly verbal exactness, gives the sense of the original passage. || *To-day.* As the Psalms were used in the public worship, every occasion of repeating this psalm reminded the musical performers and the hearers that *now*, on the present passing day, they were addressed in this exhortation; and it continued applicable to the Hebrews addressed in this epistle, as well as to their ancestors,

hear his voice, ⁸harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. — ¹²Take heed, brethren, lest there

the mention of *To-day* reminding them of their ever-present and ever-pressing duty to heed the warning and to secure an entrance into the heavenly rest.

8. *Harden not your hearts*; become not insensible to the calls of God. || *As in the provocation*, etc. Compare Ex. xvii. 1-7, and Num. xx. 1-10, relative to the people's murmuring for water, as specimens of conduct provoking the displeasure of God. Numerous other instances occurred during the forty years of the journey through the desert, in which, though they saw the works of God, both of mercy and of judgment, they still withheld from him an affectionate, persevering trust and obedience. See, also, Ps. cvi. 7-33. || *Your fathers tempted me*, etc.; tried me, or put me to the test. They put God to the test, as doubting whether he would keep his word. Compare Ex. xvii. 7; Ps. lxxviii. 18-24. || *Wherefore I was grieved*. The original word is more intensive than our word *grieved*: God's holy wrath was kindled by their sins. || *They have not known my ways*; they knew not, that is, *practically*. They acted as if they knew not the ways in which God required them to walk; they paid no heed to his counsels; they consented not to his will.

11. *So I swear* — *They shall not enter into my rest*. The determination of God that the rebellious Israelites should not enter the promised land, which seems the primary, though by no means the exclusive, meaning of his declaration, is fully set forth, with the reasons for it, in Num. xiv. 22, 23, 27-32, 35; xxxii. 10-13; also in Deut. i. 34, 35; and in Deut. xii. 9, 10, the term *rest* is applied to the quiet possession of Canaan. But the writer of this epistle passes beyond this inferior view, and does *not* at all recognize the set-

tlement in Canaan as being **THE REST** from which the unbelieving Israelites were debarred. **THAT REST** was such a *rest* as God is represented, in Gen. ii. 2, as having entered into when he had completed the creation of the world; rest in heaven for believers, when their earthly toils should be completed, as were God's works finished at the creation. — The expression *my rest*, as used in this epistle, is equivalent to *the rest into which I entered*, and is evidently significant of *heaven*, which is to be entered on when the believer's earthly labors are ended. The writer was anxious, in this hortatory paragraph, to disabuse his readers' minds of the thought that the possession of Canaan was **THE REST** which their unbelieving forefathers had lost, and that the doom pronounced against them contained no deeper significance. Though the land of Canaan had been an object of promise to the patriarchs and their descendants, — see Gen. xv. 16; xvii. 18; xxvi. 3; xxviii. 4; xxxv. 12, — and though the possession of it would indeed have been a *resting* from the migratory life of the early Hebrews, and from the toils of the Arabian desert, yet such an earthly rest would be, after all, only an emblem, or type, of the *true rest*; and this emblematic fulfilment of the promises would seem to have become less and less regarded by the *pious Jews*, while that deeper meaning which would be applicable to all generations of the true people of God seems to have crowded out of the mind, particularly of the enlightened disciples of Jesus, the inferior and earthly fulfilment of the promises.

12. *Take heed, brethren*. The writer now proceeds to use the quoted passage as a ground of direct exhortation to his readers. || *Lest there be in any*

be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. ¹⁵ While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ¹⁶ For

of you; or, more precisely, Lest there shall be in any *one of you*, as there was in your ancestors, *an evil heart of unbelief*; an evil and unbelieving heart; an evil heart in which unbelief bears sway, unbelief being here made prominent as the cause of departing from God. || *In departing*, etc.; in apostatizing from God, here denominated the *living God* as being the ever-living One, the God who claimed the faith and obedience of their forefathers; as distinguished, also, from the false gods of the heathen; and as the God of living power to do all his will, to execute his threatenings as well as to fulfil his promises.

13. *Lest any of you*, etc.; more literally, Lest *any one* from among you be hardened—as were many among your forefathers—against the calls of God by the deceitfulness of sin; that is, by the deceit which sin practises on those who yield to it.

14. The necessity of thus guarding against unbelief and departing from God arises from the principle, that we can attain to heavenly glory only through steadfastly maintaining to the end our confidence in Christ and in his promises. — *For we are made partakers of Christ*. To be a *partaker of Christ* is to be so connected with him as to partake of the blessings which he bestows as being the author of salvation. True believers in him are members of the body of which he is the Head, Eph. v. 30, or members of the family of which he is the Head, verse 6th. Compare John i. 16, “And of his fulness have all we received.” As being thus connected with him, believers are to share in the eternal bliss and glory which he will award. — The *form of expression*, *we are made partakers*, denotes what is now a fact; but it is employed in the

way of anticipation, as appears by the conditional clause immediately following. || *If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast*, etc.; if indeed,—such is the force of the original,—if indeed we hold the beginning of our confidence, that is, of our firm trust in Christ, and expectation of heavenly good from him, *steadfast unto the end*, namely, the end of our time of trial, whether the end of each one's life, or the ending of the present world, which event appears to have been expected among the earliest Christians as soon to take place, in connection, probably, with the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem.—The Hebrew brethren, like the Galatians, Gal. v. 7, had begun to confide in Christ; but in order to become actual partakers of the great objects for which they placed confidence in him, they must persevere. Compare 2 Pet. i. 5–11. A firm, unyielding adherence to Christ in faith and hope was evidently enjoined as indispensable to obtaining heavenly good. See the note on verse 6th.

15. *While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice*, etc. We must hold fast our confidence in Christ and yield ready obedience to God so long as the word To-day is used in the warnings of God to us; so long as the day of life endures.

16. *For some*, etc. — Our common translation of this verse is very imperfect, and wholly fails to represent the sense of the original. The writer's design was to show that the liability to become insensible to the calls of God and to depart from him, and thus to fail of obtaining the promised good, is great and imminent; and this liability is illustrated by the case of the unbelieving Israelites during their journeyings in the desert. The true sense of

some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to

the verse may be presented in the following manner, — *For, who were they that, having heard, did provoke God? But why do I ask this? Rather, were they not all those who came out of Egypt by Moses?* — In contemplating the unbelief and the fate of these ancient Israelites, we may well, the writer seems to say, tremble at our peril and give heed to the exhortation. The danger is fearfully great; for the generation who left Egypt with the expectation of entering the promised land failed of entering it, and failed of the heavenly rest. Not merely a few disbelieved God and perished; but the generation, as a whole, were debarred from the promised rest. — The verse as presented in our English version is singularly inappropriate and deficient. Instead of setting forth the magnitude of the danger, it represents it as comparatively small, and consequently diminishes the force of the exhortation; for, if only *some*, who had heard, provoked God by their unbelief, the tendency of men's hearts would be to regard themselves as likely to belong to the larger mass who, according to this view, were believing and obedient, and obtained the blessing. — The error of our translators arose from their not apprehending here, as they did in the succeeding verse, the interrogative force of the word which they rendered *some*. The word rendered *howbeit* was also misapprehended by them, and hence the difficulty of the passage was increased. The progress which has since their time been made in ordinary philology and in biblical interpretation has relieved the passage of its difficulty. — It is also to be observed, that the word *all* is here to be taken in its general sense, and not absolutely, as meaning *every one* without exception. The exceptions in the historical instance were so few, that, in an animated address like this, they

would naturally be overlooked. Of all the men who set out from Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua lived to enter the promised land. The entire generation of adults, that is, of persons over the age of twenty years, Num. xiv. 29, perished, with the exception of these two, since only these, on the memorable occasion of spying the land of Canaan and making a report, manifested an abiding faith in the promises of God. Even Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter Canaan, though on other grounds, Num. xx. 12, than that for which the generation, as a whole, were cut off in the desert. — For the historical account see Num. chap. xiv.; also, xxxii. 10–13; Deut. i. 22–36. — The number of truly pious persons in that entire generation must have been fearfully small; yet the eye of God may have seen some whose hearts were right with him, but who, from their position in society and from various circumstances, would not be reckoned among the actors in any public affairs, and would consequently be wholly overlooked in history.

17. *But with whom was he grieved, etc.* With whom was he angry, verse 10, forty years? Was it not with those who through disregard to the promises and warnings of God relapsed into sin, and who perished in the desert?

18. As showing still more impressively the necessity of persevering faith and obedience in order to attain to the promised blessing, a similar inquiry is made respecting God's debarring, with the solemnity of an oath, the generation of the disobedient Israelites from the heavenly rest. — *To whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest?* The expression, *his rest*, agreeably to the view in the 4th chapter, means *God's own rest*, that on which, humanly speaking, God entered when he had completed the works of creation, Gen. ii. 2; in other words,

them that believed not? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

the heavenly rest, such as God enjoys in heaven. See note on the 11th verse. || *To them that believed not*; in the original, *To them that obeyed not*; the same class mentioned in the preceding verse, *them that had sinned*. In these two verses, the *immediate* cause of the ancient Israelites' failure to attain the promised blessing is stated, rather than the remote cause, the latent source, namely, unbelief. — Anger or wrath, ascribed to God in this paragraph, and elsewhere, is not a sudden and temporary passionate excitement, like that which agitates men under provocations, and which impels them to take vengeance, or to imprecate curses, on those who have injured them. It rather resembles the deep sense of a criminal's wrong-doing and ill-desert which is felt by a judge, or executive magistrate, when, through an unswerving regard to his official duty as a minister of public justice and guardian of the rights and happiness of well-disposed members of society, he pronounces, or executes, the just doom of the law, with no personal gratification in so doing, but even with unfeigned sorrow for the unhappy fate of the criminal. God's anger is his abiding displeasure against all sin and his sense of the ill-desert of those who, against the just claims of the Creator and Ruler of all, who is sovereign Goodness itself, disregard his authority and abuse his mercy. When sinfulness is specially manifested, and the special goodness of God towards an individual, or a generation, is grossly abused, it is not surprising that a corresponding special expression is made of God's sense of such wrongfulness and ill-desert; and such expression requires the strongest terms which human language employs, and the strongest modes of asserting God's determination to inflict a righteous retribution. Hence, humanly speaking, he is angry, or wroth; and swears, or uses the language of an oath, in order to assure men of the inevitableness of the doom which they incur.

19. *So we see*; literally, *And we see*, or, *We see also*. || *They could not enter in*; that is, into his rest, the rest, or ceasing from labor, into which God is represented as having entered. || *Because of unbelief*. The immediate cause of the Israelites' failure having been mentioned in the two preceding verses, the *source* whence the relapsing into sin proceeded, is now presented; namely, unbelief, or disbelief of the declarations of God, an evil heart of unbelief, as it is termed in the 12th verse. Had they heartily believed his declarations and reposed an unwavering confidence in him for their fulfilment, they would not have disobeyed, and would not have perished under his displeasure.

CHAPTER IV.

The fate of the Israelites who perished in the desert is in this chapter applied directly to the Hebrew followers of Jesus, as a ground of warning to them against unbelief and disobedience to God; for the promise of admission into HIS REST was not only made to those ancient Israelites, who were the professed people of God, but it also remains good for the believing and obedient at the present time.

In verses 1-10 of this chapter it is maintained, *first*, that those who are here addressed had received, as well as their ancestors, the promise of entering into God's rest. *Secondly*, that their ancestors failed of the offered benefit because they did not cherish faith in the promise; for, *thirdly*, this rest is the recompense of believers, according to God's declaration in the words, *They, the unbelieving Israelites, shall not enter into my rest*; a doom pronounced against *that* generation of unbelieving Israelites, although the works from which God rested were finished at the creation; a clear intimation that THE REST still continued at that time, while that generation of Israelites was on earth, as a recompense for some. According to the

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¹ LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. ³ For we which have believed do enter into rest; as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest:

same declaration, this REST is the recompense of *believers*, for it was *unbelievers* who were debarred from it. It is maintained, *fourthly*, that this rest *still remains* as the recompense for the believing; for, long after the time of the disobedient Israelites, namely, in the time of David, God marked out a certain day for its attainment by those who should obey his voice, that is, To-day; so that the settlement of the people in the land of Canaan under Joshua, so long before the time of David, could not have been THE REST; and hence, it *still remains* for the people of God, to be entered on by them in successive generations when their earthly labors are ended.

1. *Let us therefore fear*, etc. Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise of entering into his rest still remaining, any one from among you, believers in Jesus, should fail of it as did your forefathers.—The assertion, that there *still remains* to the *believing* a promise of entering into God's rest, being of prime importance in order to admitting the force of the exhortation cited in the preceding chapter, it is here made a matter of argument; and the conclusion, as stated in the 9th verse, is substantially the same as the implied assertion in this verse; namely, there *remaineth* a rest for the people of God. || *His rest*; the rest on which, speaking after the manner of men, God entered when he had finished the creation, Gen. ii. 2; the rest for the people of God. || *On the seventh day the Lord rested and was refreshed.* || *Seem to come short of it.* The word *seem* is not here particularly emphatic, as though conveying the wish that no one might even

seem to come short; but it is used according to the refinement of the Greek style of address as a mild, conciliatory term, in order to avoid apparent arrogance and repulsiveness. A similar instance occurs in xii. 11, where it is said, "No chastening for the present *seemeth* to be joyous;" and in 1 Cor. xi. 16, "If any man *seem* to be contentious." In our ordinary conversation we frequently employ the words *seem* and *appear* in a similar manner.—*To come short of it*; literally, *to have come short of it*. In accordance with the perfect tense here used in the original, the writer was looking forward to the time when the bestowal of the promise is to be made, and when those who through unbelief and disobedience shall have forfeited the blessing will indeed appear to have come short of it.

2. *For unto us was the gospel preached*, etc.; more correctly, *For unto us have glad tidings been announced as well as unto them*; that is, We have received the joyful promise of THE REST as well as they. || *But the word preached*, etc.; more correctly, *But the declaration which they heard* did not profit them, because they did not have faith in it.

3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest*; rather, *into THE REST*, that rest which God denominated *his rest*. It is *believers* who enter into THAT REST: THAT REST is the recompense for believers, as appears from the declaration, They, the unbelieving Israelites, shall not enter into MY REST. || *If they shall enter*, etc. This is the Hebrew formula of an oath, transferred to the Greek version; and it amounts to a most positive assertion. It is rightly translated in iii. 11, "They

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. ⁵ And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

⁶ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: ⁷ again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said,

shall not enter." || *Although the works were finished*, etc.; that is, God thus and at that time spake of his rest, although the works from which he rested were finished at ending the creation; that rest, then, was still abiding, as a recompense to be bestowed on some men.

4. *For he spake in a certain place*, etc. In proof that God entered on his rest at terminating the work of creation, the passage in Gen. ii. 2 is produced; and the term *rested* in this quoted passage is considered as explaining the words *my rest* in the oath uttered against the unbelieving Israelites.

5. *And in this place again, If*, etc. The language of the oath is now employed for the additional purpose of confirming the thought that *the rest* is to be bestowed on BELIEVERS; for it was of the *unbelieving* Israelites that God said, THEY shall not enter into my rest. — The language of this doom serves the twofold purpose of showing, *first*, in the 3d verse, that believers are to enter into THE REST; and, *secondly*, in the 5th verse, that BELIEVERS, and believers only, are to enter into this rest.

6. The thought that the rest STILL CONTINUES for bestowal on believers is next presented. — *Seeing therefore it remaineth*, etc. Since, then, it remains that some are to enter into this rest (else God would not have spoken of it as that into which believers enter, and from which unbelievers are debarred), and since they who formerly received the joyful tidings, namely, the unbelieving Israelites, entered not into it, God specified at a subsequent time (as

appears in the next verse) another day during which this rest might be secured. || *They to whom it was first preached*; more properly, *They who formerly received the joyful tidings*. || *Because of unbelief*; literally, *because of disobedience*.

7. *Again*; that is, at a still later period of time, after having debarred the disobedient Israelites from THE REST. — In many editions of the English version a parenthesis is here used, embracing verses 7–10. This was inserted by the translators, but erroneously, as it impairs the proper connection of the passage. The word *again*, with which the 7th verse commences, was designed to introduce the thought that God had, long after the time of the unbelieving generation, called the attention of men to this rest still again, and specified a certain day, or time, for securing it. || *He limiteth*; more properly, *He marketh out, appointeth*. || *Saying in David*; in and through David. — The 95th Psalm, here referred to, is in the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament ascribed to David. || *To-day*. According to the original, this word ought to have been placed, in the translation, immediately after the words *a certain day*, since it mentions the day, or time, in which the rest, as still promised to believers, might be made sure of; namely, *To-day*, while the voice of God still addresses us; so long as the term *To-day* can be employed, so long the rest continues an object of promise. || *After so long a time*; that is, so long a time as from the denunciation in the desert to the exhortation by the psalmist David. The

To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.
⁸ For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. ¹⁰ For he that is entered

rest still *remained* in David's time as an object to be sought; and it still remains so long as To-day continues. It is, therefore, so long as life endures, a still future rest. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." || *As it is said*; rather, according to the more correct editions of the Greek Testament, *As it has been before said*; namely, in iii. 15. — It is an obvious reflection, that if we fail to secure this during the time which God has appointed for our securing it, the failure is IRREPARABLE! We incur a loss which can never be retrieved!

8. *For if Jesus, etc.* The word *Jesus* signifies here, as also in Acts vii. 45, *Joshua*, who after the death of Moses led the Israelites into Canaan and divided the country among them. The Hebrew name *Joshua* can be expressed in the Greek, the original language of this epistle, only by the name *Jesus*. — Since *the rest* was still an object of promise in the time of David, it is evident that the settlement of the people in Canaan under Joshua, so long a time before David, was not THE REST; for if Joshua had led them into *the rest* God would not, after the time of Joshua, have spoken of another day in which *the rest* might be gained. But as, long after the age of Joshua, men were cautioned against failing of it, and another definite time was marked out, so late as the age of David, in which it might be secured, *that rest* still *remains* to be gained or to be lost. || *Then would he not have spoken, etc.*; then God would not have spoken of *another day* during which *the rest* might be secured. Yet he did speak, in the time of David, so long after Joshua's time, of another day.

9. *There remaineth, therefore, a rest, etc.* Hence it is evident that *there still remains* a sacred resting to the people of God. This conclusion follows from the preceding reasoning, and

is in agreement with the *promise* alluded to in the first verse; and, in accordance with the language of the psalmist, *To-day* is still the time in which it is to be sought. — *A rest*. The original word for *rest* here used is a different one from that which occurs in preceding verses. It is formed from the original term for *sabbath*; if transferred to our language, it would be *sabbatism*, and it signifies *sabbath-keeping*, or *ceasing from labor*. It was naturally suggested by the use made, in preceding verses, of the seventh day, as that on which God *ceased*, or *rested*, from the work of creation, and which he set apart as thenceforth to be a day for man's resting from ordinary earthly labors. It is not only, here, equivalent to the word elsewhere used in this connection for *rest*, but was probably designed to intimate a resemblance between the heavenly rest and the sabbath-repose from the labors and cares of earthly life; those labors and cares being wholly and forever laid aside at a person's entering on the heavenly rest, or heavenly sabbath-keeping, like as they are partially and temporarily laid aside on each weekly sabbath.

10. *For he that is entered, etc.* That rest still *remains*; for it is to be entered on *after* the labors of earth are terminated, according as God entered on *his rest* after completing the work of creation. || *His rest*; God's rest, that on which God entered, and which he has called MY REST. The man who has entered on that rest ceased himself from his earthly works just as God did from his own works. — *That rest* is rest in heaven for the people of God when their earthly labors are ended. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors," Rev. xiv. 13. — Yet this rest is not a state of inactive repose. On the contrary, as God, though "he rested from all his work," Gen. ii. 2, yet "worketh hitherto,"

into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

John v. 17, so they who "rest from their labors" on earth cease not from unwearied activity in doing the will of God. — This passage, it may be remarked in passing, is incompatible with the notion that the human soul sinks, at the death of the body, into a state of sleep, or of unconsciousness. It plainly teaches that at death, which terminates the labors of earth, a resting in heaven, comparable to the state in which God is, awaits the truly pious.

As the paragraph embracing verses 1-10 is, in our common English version, singularly imperfect, it seems desirable to present the following free translation of it: — Let us, then, fear lest, a promise of entering into his rest still remaining, any one from among you may, at last, seem to have come short of it. For we have received, as well as they, the joyful message: but the declaration of God which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we enter into THE REST who have believed; according as he spake, So I swear in my wrath, They shall not ENTER INTO MY REST. And this he said at that period, though the works from which he rested were finished from the foundation of the world; for he has somewhere said concerning the seventh day, And God RESTED on the seventh day from all his works. And that BELIEVERS are to enter into his rest appears again from this passage, THEY, the unbelieving Israelites, shall not enter into my rest. — Since, then, it remains that some are to enter into it, and they who formerly received the joyful message entered not into it, on account of disobedience, God again marks out a certain day, namely, To-day, saying in David, after so long a time from the age of the unbelieving Israelites, as has before been said, To-day, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts. The rest, then, still remained in the days of David as fu-

ture and as an object of promise; for if Joshua had led the people into THE REST, God would not have afterward spoken of another day as a time for gaining it. There certainly, then, remains a rest to the people of God; for one who has entered into His rest ceased from his earthly works as God did from *his* own works.

In the several passages of the Old Testament which relate to the debarring of the rebellious Israelites from the land of Canaan, and which employ the term *rest* in reference to the settlement of the people in that country, Num. 14th chapter, and xxxii. 10-13; Dent. iii. 20; xii. 9, 10; xxv. 19; Josh. i. 13, 15; xxi. 44, no mention is made of such an extension of thought concerning that land and the resting in it as to show that the heavenly land, or heavenly rest, was understood by the ancient Hebrews as included in it. The representations and arguments in Heb. iii. 18, 19, iv. 1-10, proceed, however, on the principle that this extension of thought was apprehended by them.

Perhaps this may be accounted for by the consideration that, in the progress of religious knowledge and of acquaintance with the Scriptures, and particularly after the gospel began to reflect light on the Old Testament, religious teachers came to perceive the greater comprehensiveness of the word of God than was obvious at first reading, and they detected under the literal expression a remote significance of spiritual and eternal things.

Perhaps, again, it may be justly said, that all the temporal recompenses to be awarded to the Jews, as a people and as individuals, were in reality only emblems of the eternal recompenses in reserve for them; and that this mode of understanding the Scriptures was apprehended at an early period of the nation.

Still another view may be taken, which agrees with the spiritual mode of understanding the *promised rest* assumed in this part of the epistle. —

¹¹ Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. ¹² For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-

Though the rewards promised to the Israelites in case of their obedience to the divine commands were temporal, yet the obedience required of them and promised by them was a genuine obedience springing from supreme love to God. It was not an external and ceremonial obedience only; but as truly the sincere obedience of the heart as is that required by the gospel. Now, with such a spirit towards God as this would indicate on the part of the obedient, the merely temporal rewards would, of course, be inadequate: they would be suitable while the persons should remain in this temporal state; but on their departure to the unseen world, only the heavenly recompenses would be suitable, and these would certainly be given. In the divine mind, then, the ultimate and eternal blessings were as really designed to be bestowed as the present and temporal. Hence, a sacred writer, commenting on passages of the ancient Scriptures, a long time after the period alluded to in them, might be expected to leave quite out of account the present and temporal recompense, and bring into prominence the spiritual and eternal, as the ground of encouragement and warning. That the radical difference between the righteous and the wicked is found in the Old Testament, that a truly spiritual obedience was required in the Old Testament, and that cordial penitence for transgression was required and graciously accepted by God in those early times, and that ceremonial service without such penitence could not avail for recovering the lost favor of God, must be evident to every attentive reader of the Pentateuch and the other historical books, of the Psalms, of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets. And since the service which God required was a service of the whole heart, it is not surprising that he purposed to recompense the obedient Israelites not only with a quiet settlement in Canaan, but also

with REST IN HEAVEN; and, consequently, that the unbelieving and disobedient Israelites were debarred, not only from Canaan, but also from heaven.

11. *Let us labor therefore*, etc. Since, then, the promise of entering into THAT REST still remains, let us be in earnest to gain it. Compare vi. 11, 12; 2 Pet. i. 10. || *Lest any man fall*, etc.; lest any one fall into destruction as did the disobedient Israelites. Compare verso 1. — *Unbelief*; literally, *disobedience*.

12, 13. This incitement to give all diligence for attaining to the heavenly rest is further enforced by the consideration that divine truth, as delivered from God to man, has in it life and energy, and penetrates to the inmost soul, judging the very thoughts; that nothing is concealed from God; all things are open to his inspection. — *For the word of God*; the messages of God to men; his revealed will, particularly the system of divine doctrine by the Son of God. Compare xiii. 7. || *Is quick*. The term *quick* in the Bible has the sense of *living*. The word of God is not a dead mass of instructions, incapable of acting on men's souls, ministering nothing to their spiritual life. On the contrary, it is a living agency, and wakes to ready activity the dormant powers of men. || *And powerful*; full of energy, effective in producing results. The gospel, thus powerful, secures to those who obey it the heavenly rest as the appropriate result of their faith in its promises and their obedience to its directions: it also effectually debars from that rest those who are not in good earnest seeking it, but are neglecting the great salvation. To the one it is a savor of life unto life; to the other, of death unto death. Compare 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. Obedience to the gospel tends directly and strongly to produce fitness for salvation, while those who obey it not become "thereby fitted to destruction," Rom. ix. 22. || *Sharper than any two-*

edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight : but all things

edged sword; a sword which cuts both ways, and therefore does sure execution. This comparison is made in order to illustrate the power, or effectiveness, of the word of God; it more surely executes its purpose of mercy and of judgment than does a double-edged sword answer the purpose of a man who skilfully wields it. || *Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.* The idea of a sword is still further employed to illustrate the penetrating, scrutinizing quality of divine truth. The word of God pierces deeply into man; it penetrates through the surface even to the dividing of the soul asunder and to the dividing asunder of the spirit. A two-edged sword pierces through the flesh and sunders it : the word of God, sharper than that, penetrates to the interior of man's nature, dividing, as it were, the sentient soul, that is, the seat of man's natural life and impulses; dividing asunder, also, the spirit, that is, the rational and moral part of man. The idea is that of close scrutiny, and of gaining access to the very inmost of man's heart and causing it to feel the power of divine truth. || *And of the joints and marrow*; another mode of expressing the same thought. The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword; for while a sword pierces and sunders the flesh, the word of God goes so deep into the soul, with its scrutinizing power, that its operation may be likened to that of dividing the joints of a living body, yea, even of penetrating through the bones to the marrow and dividing even that. — The *dividing of joints and marrow* may have been a proverbial expression, of a hyperbolical character (such as common sayings frequently are; compare our Lord's simile, in Matt. xix. 24, of a camel going through the eye of a needle), as if one should conceive of a sword capable of penetrating through bones into the marrow. If it were a

proverbial expression, its use after the mention of soul and spirit, more important and deeper parts of man, is natural, as a colloquial and intensive mode of repeating the thought. || *And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The word *discerner* is here used in its primary sense of *distinguishing*, or *discriminating*, between several things. The word of God makes a man examine with discrimination even his thoughts and designs; he is made to contemplate them from a moral point of view, so that he discerns between what is right in them and what is wrong. He is thus led either to self-approbation or to self-condemnation, according as his affections and principles are in harmony with the will of God or in opposition to it; and thus, from the latent operations of his spirit, as well as from his acts, he is compelled to form his judgment of himself. — The aim of this passage is, to impress the certainty that God penetrates the inmost soul of man, taking cognizance of the most secret purposes and motives; that in executing his declarations nothing, however concealed from man, can escape his notice; that the most hidden and intricate elements of character are all known to him. With unerring certainty he detects every departure from his will, and with un-failing execution gives energy to his threatenings against sin. — The word of God when properly apprehended, especially by an awakened conscience, is seen to lay its demands on the very thoughts and designs; it penetrates so deeply as to reach even them, and to pass judgment on them. It extends to the very springs of human action, and passes judgment on men in precise accordance with their latent purposes and motives.

13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight.* And there is not a creature unseen, or unobserved, in the sight of God : nothing appears

are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. ¹⁵ For we have not a High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but

before him in a false light: all things are naked and laid bare to *the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, of that Being who lays on us his commands, who will call us to account and dispose of us in perfect agreement with his declarations. || *Opened*. The word thus translated is singularly expressive, being derived from the word which signifies *neck*, and suggested by the action of a person who should seize another by the throat and force his head back, thus laying bare his neck, and, in countries where the upper dress is loose, his breast. Thus completely laid bare to the inspection of God are all things. Compare Ps. cxxxix. 1-12. — The insidious nature of unbelief, working out its fatal results without alarming its victim, is also strongly intimated, as well as the omniscience of God in detecting its lurking places and subjecting it to his righteous judgment.

14-16. The view just presented of the word of God naturally awakens solicitude, lest when brought to the test we may fail of his approval. The consciousness of our liability to sin and of the inherent weakness of our hearts directs our thoughts to our great High-priest in heaven, who knows our infirmities and can feel for us in respect to them. With confidence in him we may come to the throne of grace, to obtain pardoning mercy and to find grace, or favor, in securing to ourselves opportune aid, help that meets our difficulties in good season, and, before it is too late, delivers us from danger. — *Seeing, then, that we have a great High-priest*. In view of the strict regard which God maintains for his word, and of the certainty that he detects the most latent sins, the writer again, as in ii. 17, 18, presents the encouraging thought that we have a High-priest in heaven, Jesus the Son

of God, and exhorts to a steadfast maintenance of our avowal of confidence in him. || *That is passed into the heavens*; literally, *who has gone through the heavens*; that is, gone through the visible heavens up to the throne of God, and is there acting in behalf of his followers, procuring for them mercy and aid in their trials. The thought is substantially the same as in ix. 24, where Christ is said to have entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." See, also, i. 3, where Christ is said, after having made expiation for sins, to have taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high; also, i. 13; xii. 2. Compare Mark xvi. 19. || *Let us hold fast our profession*; our profession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God and our High-priest. Compare iii. 1; also, x. 23, which enjoins an unwavering profession of the hope in Jesus.

15. The sympathizing spirit of Jesus the great High-priest encourages in his followers an unwavering confidence in him. — *For we have not an High-priest which cannot be touched*, etc.; or, agreeably to the original expression, *For we have not a High-priest who cannot sympathize with us in our infirmities*, who cannot feel with us and for us in our infirmities. — The infirmities here spoken of are both the sinful frailties for which we are culpable, and those which are necessarily incident to the present state and circumstances of human beings as composed of body and spirit, as liable to ignorance and error, and constantly meeting with temptations to sin from so many sources. Christ, by his having become a partaker of human nature in this world, has become able to feel for his followers in their circumstances of trial, and to have a priestly pity for them even in their sins. || *Was in all points*

was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.
¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

tempted like as we are. In ii. 17, Christ is said to have become in all essential respects like men; he was, consequently, liable to be tempted in all respects like them. Being on earth as truly a man as any of us, he was tempted as men are, by Satan, by his human adversaries, and by his professed friends. Temptations arose from his bodily nature, from his rational faculties, from his emotional susceptibilities, from his connections with his natural relatives and with men to whom he was intellectually so superior that he might have swayed them to the accomplishment of the most daring and ambitious projects, had he been willing to indulge the love of power and pre-eminence so natural to man. — That Christ was really tempted and keenly felt the force of temptations, as well as endured sufferings, while on earth, is evident from this passage, as also from the general account, in the Gospels, of his life and death. Whatever difficult questions may be raised from the peculiarity of his being the Son of God while yet humbled to the level of humanity, we must not allow ourselves to lose the efficacy of the equally scriptural truth that he was like us, that he was really made liable to the frailties and temptations of which men have experience, and doubtless that he suffered, on account of his perfect sinlessness, far more from some, at least, of the temptations which assailed him than it is possible for us to conceive of. || *Yet without sin.* The likeness of Jesus to us in nature and liabilities was as close as it could be without sin. He was without sin as resulting from the temptations to which he was subjected. Temptation never prevailed over him, but left him, after the most dire and insidious conflicts, as free from sin as it found him. He was without sin, also, as being entirely free from inclination to sin; his entire moral bent was against it, and

was unswervingly towards obedience to the will of his heavenly Father. Though he had all the natural susceptibilities by which temptation overcomes us, yet these were always counterbalanced by his unconquerable love to God and purpose to do his Father's will. When the prince of this world, Satan, came to him, he found nothing in him, John xiv. 30, on which he could successfully operate, and he retired invariably foiled. From every conflict with temptation Jesus came forth unharmed and ready for new conquests. Compare the note on ii. 17. See also 1 Pet. ii. 21-23, the substance of which verses is, Christ has left us a perfect example; he did no sin. — Though Christ was without sin, he yet knew by experience what it is to be tempted; he also knows by experience what strength of holy feeling and purpose is necessary for overcoming temptations; he can, therefore, sympathize with us and aid us, as a compassionate and experienced high-priest. See ii. 18. — It was highly important to give prominence to the thought that Jesus was without sin; as this was a point on which he *differed* from the Jewish high-priests, and which was necessary for maintaining unimpaired the reverence due to him, and for preventing the slightest suspicion that his official work might not have been acceptable to God. It was, also, important to affirm that though he was without sin, yet his human experience capacitated him to feel the pity which a high-priest ought to feel for those who have been drawn astray into sin; for if the high-priest, who is entrusted with our interests in reference to God, be not compassionate toward us, whence can we hope for pardon and acceptance? — To be *tempted* is not a proof that we are sinners; sin consists in *yielding* to temptation. A man of the simplest and strictest integrity may be strongly tempted to a dishonest act, yet he may

PART THIRD.

CHAPTERS V., VI., VII.

JESUS CHRIST, THE HIGH-PRIEST, SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL HIGH-PRIESTS.

§ Requisites for the high-priestly office, v. 1-4. § These requisites found in Jesus, v. 5-10. § Hortatory section, v. 11-14; vi. 1-20. — § Coincidences between Melchizedek and Christ, vii. 1-3. § Greatness of Melchizedek and implied greatness of Jesus as High-priest, in comparison with the Levitical high-priests, vii. 4-10. § Imperfectness of the Levitical priesthood and of the Mosaic law; abrogation of the Law and establishment of the Better Dispensation, vii. 11-19. § Superiority of Christ's priesthood further asserted, vii. 20-23.

instantly repel the temptation, and the horror with which he thinks of a dishonest act when under the temptation may be a sure safeguard against a similar temptation.

16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.* God is here represented as a king occupying his throne and waiting to receive petitions from his subjects. His throne is not merely a throne of holiness and justice, but also of grace; from it proceeds an answer of favor to the sincere and earnest suppliant. To this throne, since we have so great a High-priest at the right hand of God, patronizing our cause, we are encouraged to come *boldly*, that is, confidently, with assurance that God is ready to bestow all needed aid. || *That we may obtain mercy*, etc. The design of applying to God in our consciousness of sins and of temptations is, that he may mercifully deal with us, freely forgiving our sins and extending to us grace, or favorable regard, for our *help in time of need*; rather, agreeably to the original, *opportune, seasonable, or well-timed aid*; an expression which covers the entire ground of our necessities, and which assures us that the aid we need will not be delayed beyond the proper time.

Such are the affecting thoughts with which this second part of the epistle closes, in remarkable similarity to the close of the first part, ii. 17, 18. It is also interesting to observe, at this point, the return, with some enlargement, to the ideas with which this part

commenced; for in iii. 1, mention is made of Jesus as the High-priest, and of the profession of having received him in this capacity; in iv. 14-16, is a renewed mention of Jesus, the Son of God, as the great High-priest, and exhortation to hold fast this profession, in view of the matchless fitness of Jesus to occupy that relation. Again, then, we see the topic of Christ's priesthood, the main one of the epistle, incidentally, yet attractively, suggested, previously to the full consideration of it to which the writer was now about to conduct his readers.

PART III.

CHAPTERS V., VI., VII.

JESUS CHRIST, THE HIGH-PRIEST, SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL HIGH-PRIESTS.

This part treats of *Christ as the High-priest of his Followers*; a topic already glanced at several times, ii. 17, 18, iv. 14-16, and evidently designed at the outset as the principal one of the epistle. It is introduced by a preliminary section touching on the requisites for the office of high-priest, and showing the possession of these requisites on the part of Jesus, v. 1-10. This is followed by a hortatory section, extending through the 6th chapter. — The high-priestly office of Christ is then resumed for consideration. Since Jesus was to be a priest according to the rank of Melchizedek, a description of Melchizedek is given as a basis for showing the superiority of Jesus, as High-priest, to the Levitical high-priests. — He is not only superior to them, but being of a different order, or rank, he supersedes them; and, by virtue of this change in the priesthood, the whole Mosaic economy is abrogated, and a new and better covenant established between God and his people, vii. 1-23.

CHAPTER V.

¹ For every high-priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: ² who can have com-

CHAPTER V.

There is an intimate connection of thought between the close of the second part and the opening of the third. In bringing the second part to a close, the writer reminds us that, since we have a great High-priest in heaven who feels for us and with us in our temptations, we may come with assurance to the throne of grace to obtain mercy. The very idea of a high-priest acting in our behalf encourages us to come before God; *for* every high-priest, as being taken from among men, is appointed in behalf of men to procure for them God's mercy and favor, v. 1. The mention of the *design* of the high-priest's office leads at once to a view of the requisites for it; namely, a spirit compassionate to human infirmity through personal experience, and a special call from God to the office, v. 2-4. These requisites, it is then shown, are found in Jesus, v. 5-10.—The claim that Jesus is the High-priest in heaven is thus substantiated, and the way prepared for showing, in due time, his superiority to the Levitical priests, and the necessary consequences of the high-priesthood's having become vested in him.

1. *For*. This word forms the transition from the preceding to the present paragraph. It gives a ground for the statement that Jesus, the High-priest, is compassionate to his followers, and for the exhortation to come to the throne of grace; *for* every high-priest, as being a man, is appointed on behalf of men; the very *design* of the office corresponds with the statement and the exhortation. || *Every high-priest*; that is, every one properly so denominated, every one who properly performs the duties of his office. The standard by which a high-priest would be judged of, would be, of course, the Mosaic law; and, consequently, agree-

ably to the entire connection of thought here, Levitical priests are had in view. || *Taken from among men*; being taken, that is, *as* being taken, from among men. The fact of his being a man and of his being taken from among men is presupposed in his appointment to the office of high-priest, as making it suitable that he should be *ordained for men*; that is, that he should be appointed in behalf of men in their concerns with God.—As being subjects of the government of God, men are responsible to him; and as being sinners, they are liable to the penalties of his law. In their behalf, then, as thus responsible and liable, a mediating high-priest is appointed, through whom the mercy and grace of God may be extended to them. That he may suitably discharge this office, he must be one taken from among men. || *That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices*. These terms include all the offerings made to the Lord as required by the Mosaic law; but here particularly those which had reference to sins, and which were designed to procure pardon and divine favor for the offerer. The class of offerings called *gifts* included animals as well as productions of the ground and other income; and the animals thus presented to the Lord were slain, and atonement, or reconciliation, was thereby effected, the sinfulness of the offerer being in this way acknowledged and confessed. See Lev. i. 2-5. The distinction which might be made between *gifts*, as avowals of gratitude to God for providential blessings and as acknowledgments of his right to a portion of all income for the support of the religious service and of the priests, and *sacrifices*, as propitiatory offerings, does not here accord with the writer's purpose. It is evidently the *gifts and sacrifices* which were offered for sins, to procure remission and to maintain a state of favor

passion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.
 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also

with God, that are here meant. || *For sins*; that is, on account of sins committed, so as to procure forgiveness and reconciliation. A high-priest is appointed in behalf of men, to offer on account of their sins gifts and sacrifices. — The general idea of sacrifices was, that the offerer, penitent for his transgressions, acknowledged his ill-desert, and regarded the death of the animal as significant of what he himself deserved at the hand of God, and as a substitute for his own deserved sufferings in such a sense as that, in consequence of it, he was ransomed from his liability to punishment.

2. This verse presents the first indispensable requisite of the high-priest's office; namely, a spirit of compassion for frail, sinning men; regarding them with pity, and ever ready to aid them in recovering the favor of God and the path of obedience. — *Who can have compassion*; who can be tender in spirit, disposed to aid a transgressor in seeking forgiveness and restoration to the divine favor; not needlessly severe towards an offender, so as to repel him and discourage the hope of mercy. || *On the ignorant and on them that are out of the way*. Not two classes of men are here meant; but, according to the original, the class of those who are *ignorant and erring*, or straying from the right path. The term *ignorant* is employed as a mild expression for *sinful*, somewhat as we use the word *errors* as signifying *misdemeanors* and *crimes*. This use of the word is to be traced to the Old Testament, which made a distinction between sins of *ignorance*, that is, of mistake or of inadvertency, which nevertheless needed atonement and pardon, and sins of *presumption*, that is, of conscious and deliberate transgression. For this latter class of sins no method of procuring pardon was appointed, but the transgressor must be put to death. Thus we read in Num. xv. 30, 31, "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be

born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." — Transgressions of not so aggravated a dye belonged to the other class; yet even if a person had through real ignorance of the law committed a violation of it, he was held guilty, and a sacrifice was required in acknowledgment of his sin and ill-desert, in order that he might become clear of guilt and receive forgiveness. Compare Num. xv. 22-29; Lev. iv. 2, 13, 22, 27; v. 17-19. — A corresponding use of the word *errors*, more correctly *deeds of ignorance*, with the meaning of *sins*, occurs in Heb. ix. 7. || *He himself also is compassed with infirmity*; that is, moral infirmity, sinfulness. *To be compassed with infirmity*, is a strong expression indicating a person's consciousness of his sinfulness, as though he felt it pressing on him all around like a garment wrapped about him. — The idea is, that a high-priest, notwithstanding his sacred relation to God and to the people, is, like other men, a sinner; he knows and *feels* himself to be a sinner as well as the individual is sinful, or the people, in whose behalf he officiates. He has to confess that, even against his better judgment and his wishes, he has not an *effectual power* of resistance to natural sinful inclination. He is unawares drawn aside from obedience to God, and feels that sin, rather than holiness, is his natural bent. It may be presumed, then, that, being a man, he is able to regard men with tenderness, as knowing that he himself needs mercy from God as well as they.

3. *And by reason hereof he ought*, etc.; on account of this infirmity, inherent in his nature as well as in theirs, he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for those of the people. He needs forgiveness as well

for himself, to offer for sins. ⁴ And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

as they; and the favor of God towards himself can be obtained in no other way than that which is prescribed for the people. See Lev. iv. 2, 3, etc.; ix. 2, 7, 8, 15; xvi. 3, 6, 11-14, 17. — The high-priest must offer the sacrifice in reference to himself *before* he could acceptably offer in reference to the people; since, in order that his service for the people might be acceptable, he must himself be in a state of favor with God.

4. The second requisite for the office of high-priest is now given; namely, a man must be called of God to the office, not taking it to himself by any merely human impulse. — *And no man taketh this honor unto himself*, etc. A high-priest, according to a just view of his position, does not arrogate the dignity to himself; he enters not on the office by his own arrangement or choice, but as being called to it of God. *As was Aaron*; as also Aaron, the first high-priest, was called of God. The appointment of Aaron to be chief or high-priest, was by the direction of God to Moses. See Ex. xxviii. 1, "Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." — The sons of Aaron and their descendants were set apart by divine authority to be priests, Ex. xxviii. 1, 40, 41; xxix. 1-9; Lev. vii. 36. A son of the high-priest would naturally be his successor in this office, and in ordinary times this was the case, though, as there was no divine precept on that point, this son was not always his first-born. This original appointment of Aaron and his descendants to the chief-priesthood and the ordinary priestly office was sufficient for coming generations; a repeated divine call in every succeeding individual instance was not requisite. A departure, however, from the regular Levitical succession, or an appointment *aside* from

the Levitical law, could be valid only as emanating from God's authority. — The entire tribe of Levi, to which Aaron belonged, was separated from the other tribes for religious service; all the males, not belonging to the family of Aaron, were assigned their respective duties in attendance on the priests and in the care of the tabernacle, as circumstances should require, Num. i. 47-53; iii. 5-9; viii. 14, 15, 19. — It may be stated as a matter of historical interest, that this divine arrangement in regard to the priesthood was disregarded during the period of political reverses which befell the Jewish nation subsequently to the return from the Babylonian exile. When Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria from the year 175 to 166 before Christ, had control of the nation, he "sold the office of high-priest to the highest bidder. In the year 152 before Christ, Alexander, king of Syria, conferred the office of high-priest on the heroic general, Jonathan, whose brother Simon was afterwards created by the Jews both prince and high-priest. His posterity, who at the same time sustained the office of kings, occupied the station of high-priest till the time of Herod, who took the liberty to change the incumbents in that office at his pleasure; a liberty which the Romans ever after exhibited no restraint in exercising." *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology*, § 366.

5. Having presented two essential requisites for the high-priestly office, the writer next proceeds to show that these requisites meet in Christ. As it was not his purpose at this point of the discussion to institute a comparison between the Levitical high-priests and Christ, he does not here give prominence to any dissimilarities between them and him, but, reserving that point for future treatment, simply shows that the true ideal of a high-priest is realized in Christ. He also reverses the order in which the requisites had been mentioned and first

⁵ So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high-priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. ⁶ As he saith also in another *place*, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

states the fact that Christ was appointed by the Father to the office. — *So also Christ glorified not himself*, etc. As a special appointment from God was necessary in order to a person's becoming a high-priest, Christ did not put forth a claim to this office by asserting for himself superior excellence; he did not set up himself as eminently worthy of it on the ground of personal qualifications, and thus seek to be made the high-priest. Compare John viii. 54. But his Father appointed him to this station of glory, and at length elevated him to it through the sufferings and trials of his human experience. That it was the Father who glorified him with this office appears from the declarations which he had made to Christ. First, he had said, as in Ps. ii. 7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." — The designation of Christ to the high-priesthood seems to have been regarded as implied in the fact that he was the Son of God; in other words, Christ was the High-priest by virtue of being the Son of God. In what way, however, the sonship of Christ contains his appointment to be High-priest, does not readily appear. But to the Hebrews here addressed this was doubtless clear. The views which were familiar to them as to the relation of the first-born son in a family might, perhaps, have made the statement clear. According to Jewish writers, the first-born son was, before the giving of the Mosaic law, entitled to the right of discharging the priestly office in the family to which he belonged. In the patriarchal times, the father, as head of the family, was the family-priest; but, as the first-born son shared in the honors and rights of the father, so likewise he came to be regarded as the priest of the family. In the household of God, then, iii. 6, the Son of God, called the First-born, i. 6; Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15, and the

Only-begotten, John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9, would easily be conceived of as occupying, by virtue of his sonship, the relation of high-priest. What would be thus easily apprehended by the original readers of this epistle, corresponded with the actual appointment of the Father, an appointment which was afterward clearly revealed, Ps. cx. 4; Zech. vi. 12, 13, that his Son should be the High-priest of his spiritual family.

6. To the indirect proof, just given, that it was the Father who had conferred on Christ the glory of the high-priestly office, a second, and direct, proof is now added. — *As he saith also in another place*; namely, Ps. cx. 4. || *Thou art a priest forever*, etc. This address was universally understood as made to Christ. Compare Matt. xxii. 41–45. || *The order of Melchizedek*; or, more properly, the rank of Melchizedek. Christ was to have a priestly office of a rank like that of Melchizedek; as is explained in vii. 15, where Christ is spoken of as a priest "after the similitude," that is, likeness, "of Melchizedek." — He was to be a priest *forever*, an abiding, perpetual priest, not liable, through death, or any cause, to the necessity of giving place to another. So long as a priestly office for the people of God shall be required, it is to be held by the Son of God only. — From the nature of the case, as being the *only* priest thus appointed, and as being a divinely appointed king, Ps. ii. 6, as well as priest, the Son of God is the High-priest. — The particulars involved in the resemblance to Melchizedek are not here unfolded by the writer, as he was not now instituting a comparison between the Levitical priests and Christ, but was merely sustaining the position that Christ was called of God to be a high-priest; hence the words *Thou art a priest* are here the specially important ones as meeting the case in hand. Still, without di-

⁷ Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was

lating on the particulars contained in the latter part of the address, it was important to secure for this declaration of God a place in the minds of the Hebrews. Their reflections on it would awaken inquiry and prepare them to follow the writer in his subsequent development of its meaning. It contained a fruitful seed of thought in reference to the priestly office of Christ. It was, indeed, the hinge on which turned the vast difference between the Jewish priests and Christ the High-priest of his followers.

7. Having now seen that Christ was exalted to the office of High-priest by appointment of the Father, we are next led to contemplate his possession of the other requisite for officiating in behalf of men, and his actual entrance on his office. He is able to feel with and for those in whose behalf he mediates with God; he can sympathize with them in their sufferings and temptations, and seek mercy for them as one who can pity them even when overcome by temptation through the weakness of their moral nature. — *In the days of his flesh*; while a partaker of flesh and blood, passing through the vicissitudes of this frail, mortal state. His days on earth were the *days of his flesh* in distinction from the state in which he was with the Father before the world was made, John xvii. 5, 24; also, in distinction from the state to which he was exalted after he had humbled himself to the form of man and become obedient even to the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 9–11. ¶ *When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*, etc. While the entire series of sufferings and temptations which our Lord endured on earth would be necessary for a complete view of his human experience, an eminent scene of suffering and obedience, namely, that which passed in Gethsemane, is here selected as best adapted to show the very trying nature of the probation to which he was subjected, the intensity of the anguish

thus occasioned to him, and the thoroughness of his obedience to his heavenly Father. The appalling scenes in our Lord's earthly life, here instanced, are particularly detailed in Matt. xxvi. 36–46; Mark xiv. 32–39; Luke xxii. 39–44. Compare, also, Matt. xx. 22; John xii. 27. As the obedience of Jesus was not completed till he expired on the cross, all the indignities and sufferings which he endured at his seizure, his condemnation, and on the cross, must also be included in the list of his trials. ¶ *And was heard*; was heard favorably, was accepted. He was accepted in his prayer, while yet the suffering, both that which he was enduring and that which was in prospect, could not, according to the design of God and his own purpose in coming into the world, be averted. His prayer, breathed forth in intense anguish, was marked by submission to the divine will, Matt. xxvi. 39, 42; Luke xxii. 42; John xviii. 11, more than by shrinking from distress and by desire to be spared the pain; it was therefore acceptable. Though his soul was sorrowful even unto death, and he prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me," he immediately added, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done," Luke xxii. 42, thus meekly bowing to the will of God. When, in consciousness of deep trouble, he was for a moment considering whether he should pray for deliverance from the closing sufferings of his earthly course, he dismissed the thought, and said, "For this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify thy name," John xii. 27, 28. The prayer of Christ in his agony was not, strictly speaking, a prayer for deliverance from the sufferings the pressure of which was already so great; it was in reality a prayer that the will of God might be done throughout, that the Father would glorify his name through his suffering Son; and it virtually contained a petition that the full measure of needed aid might be

heard in that he feared: ⁸ though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: ⁹ and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto

granted him. His prayer was heard; and in answer to it, there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him, Luke xxii. 43. — Let the pervading spirit of *our* prayers, also, be, that the wise and gracious purpose of God in respect to us may be accomplished by whatever means he may appoint. || *In that he feared*; that is, on account of his pious fear of God, his reverence for his heavenly Father. His holy fear and love of God never gave way, and he was consequently in all things accepted of God.

8. *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience*, etc. Though being a son and most tenderly regarded in that relation, it was yet the Father's appointment that he should be subjected to trials and sufferings that he might learn by experience the nature and circumstances of human obedience to the will of God, and the difficulties and hazards which it must encounter. His spirit of obedience was thus specially tested, and it gathered fresh strength to do and endure all the will of God; it was carried to the highest perfection through sufferings. The virtue of Christ, though never in the least degree deficient, was yet capable of increasing in strength and ability to resist temptation; somewhat as it is said in Luke ii. 52, "he increased in wisdom and in favor with God and man." Though he was his Son, yet God saw fit to adopt suffering as the method of his learning completely the lesson of obedience and the method of effecting a connection of sympathy between him and the people of God, who so greatly need the discipline of suffering in order to break the power of sin in them and to fit them for heaven. — Since the sinless Son of God, in order to become the effectual High-priest, passed through inconceivable sufferings on the way to his destined glory, well may his followers bear with acquiescence the sufferings which infinite Wisdom appoints for bringing them to the full enjoyment of the benefits procured by the

great High-priest in their deliverance from sin and becoming partakers with him in the heavenly glory.

9. *And being made perfect, he became the author*, etc.; and having, through his sufferings, become perfected in the capacity of a high-priest, both as to fitness for the office and exaltation to it in heaven, he became the author, more strictly the causer, of eternal salvation to all who obey him. — His *being made perfect* is to be explained in the comprehensive sense mentioned under ii. 10. It embraces his elevation, after having been raised from the dead, to the perfect dignity of his high-priestly office in heaven. Compare vi. 20; Luke xxiv. 26. Being thus exalted through a course of sufferings to that position for which those sufferings eminently qualified him, he is become the procuring cause of salvation to his followers. At this point we may regard him not only as possessing the requisites for the high-priesthood, but also as invested with the office. — Those who *obey him* are those who acknowledge him as the great High-priest in whom they trust for acceptance with God, and as their heavenly Lord to whose authority they bow. No particular act of obedience is here specified or intended; it is the spirit of obedience to Christ, a regard to his will in all the relations which he sustains to us, that is required. Without this, we are not his followers, and have no ground for expecting to be finally acknowledged as his. "Ye are my friends," he says, "if ye do whatsoever I command you," John xv. 14; also, xiv. 15, 21. See, also, Matt. vii. 21-23; Luke vi. 46. — The salvation which he bestows is *eternal*, as being an everlasting deliverance from the penalties and thralldom of sin and the everlasting possession of holiness and bliss in heaven. Christ saves completely, vii. 25, and forever, them that obey him. The mention of *obedience to him* is here eminently appropriate, since he himself attained his per-

all them that obey him ; ¹⁰ called of God a high-priest after the order of Melchizedek.

¹¹ Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. ¹² For when for the

feeted state through sufferings which required on his part constant obedience to the Father ; and now those who are in like manner obedient to him will receive the salvation of which he is the procuring Cause. — Perhaps in the word *eternal* a contrast is designed of the temporary deliverances from the Mosaic penalties through the agency of the Jewish priests, and the unending deliverance from the power and condemnation of sin through Christ. Thus the great purpose of the priestly office is completely answered by Christ ; namely, salvation from the deserved consequences of sin and from its power ; a salvation only faintly shadowed forth by the deliverances from the penalties of the Mosaic law through the agency of the Jewish priests.

10. *Called of God a high-priest.* The original word here for *called* is different from the word in the 4th verse. It does not mean *appointed*, but is more correctly translated *having been addressed*. Reference is had to Ps. ex. 4, where the address to Christ, "Thou art a priest," etc., is recorded. — When Christ had completed his whole course of obedience and suffering, he was exalted to his perfect glory, and became the author of eternal salvation, having been long since addressed of God as a High-priest. Prophetically and by anticipation he had been pronounced a priest : that prophetic address had now become fulfilled. God had exalted him to this official position. — That Jesus, as priest, was to be the *High-priest*, see on verse 6th. || *After the order of Melchizedek.* See on verse 6th.

Before entering fully on the consideration of Christ as a High-priest, the writer judged it necessary to awaken anew, by a hortatory strain of address, the attention of the Hebrews, and to stimulate their faculties so that they might properly apprehend the subject. This hortatory section embraces the re-

mainder of the 5th chapter and the whole of the 6th. — After rebuking their lack of progress in Christian knowledge, v. 11-14, he encourages them to aim at maturity in Christian attainments, vi. 1-3, and unfolds the danger which they would incur by apostatizing from Christ, vi. 4-8. He then expresses confidence in their piety, and avows, as the ground of his solicitude for them, his desire that they may abide in faith, and may follow the example of those who have entered on the enjoyment of the promised blessings, vi. 9-12. He encourages them to do this in view of the unchangeable faithfulness of God to his promises, vi. 13-20.

11. *Of whom ;* that is, of Melchizedek, who has been twice named already, vs. 6 and 10, in a connection suited to arrest the attention of the Hebrews. Of Melchizedek it would be necessary to say *many things*, in the argument concerning Christ as the High-priest. || *Hard to be uttered ;* things hard to explain so as to be fully understood ; not difficult of apprehension, however, in themselves, but difficult to be properly understood by the Hebrews, in consequence of their spiritual dulness. || *Seeing ye are dull of hearing ;* more correctly, since ye are become dull, slow of apprehension as to religious truth.

12. They had lapsed into this state of spiritual imbecility from a hopeful beginning of the Christian profession. — *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers*, etc. They had for so long a time professed to be disciples of Christ, and consequently to be learning the Christian religion, that they ought to have been able to teach others. — That they had for a long time been professed Christians appears also from ii. 3, xiii. 7. But through lack of interest in Christian knowledge, and specially through the decline of an obedient spirit, together with the disposition to rest in external forms of religion

time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

without penetrating to the meaning of the forms, and to receive directions on authority without inquiring into the reasons of them, — a disposition which was doubtless fostered by the Jewish externalism in which their early years had been spent, — they were now not only incapable of teaching the Christian doctrine, but needed to be themselves taught anew its very elements. Instead of advancing in Christian knowledge, they had lost ground, and the work of Christian instruction needed to be commenced again. || *First principles*; the very beginnings, the first rudiments. || *Of the oracles of God*; of the communications of God to men; particularly, in this connection, the gospel of Christ. || *And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat*; you have reduced yourselves to the necessity of being fed with milk, not having acquired ability for solid food. This incapacity for receiving the higher instructions of the gospel they had themselves induced by their neglect of religious truth: instead of having advanced to maturity, they had declined to an infantile stage of Christian ability, and must now be treated accordingly as to spiritual nourishment. They must be fed with milk, not with solid food. The first rudiments of Christian doctrine were all they could now profitably receive. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 2, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."

13. *For every one that useth milk is unskilful*, etc. You must be fed with milk, not with solid food; for every one who receives the milk of Christian instruction is so treated because he is unskilled or ignorant as to the gospel,

having not yet become sufficiently mature to bear advanced instruction. Spiritually, he is a babe; and such, the implication is, are ye. — In other words, instead of having attained to maturity, so as properly to receive and appreciate the loftier truths of the gospel, you have receded to the state of childhood. || *The word of righteousness*; the gospel, viewed particularly as disclosing the divine plan of justifying men in the sight of God and conducting them to righteousness.

14. *But strong meat belongeth*, etc.

But the solid food of advanced instruction belongs to the mature, those who have reached maturity of Christian experience, and whose senses or perceptive faculties have, through habitual use of them in the devout contemplation of religious subjects, been exercised and become trained for a correct judgment as to good and evil. — It is not the mere discerning between right and wrong, in general, that is here meant; but the judging between the good and wholesome, and the bad and hurtful, in religious doctrines, so as rightly to estimate Christian truth in contrast with the errors and the merely outward righteousness which were so common among the Jews. This exercising, or training, of the faculties to the right apprehension of the doctrine of righteousness in the sight of God leads to maturity, the advanced stage of Christian strength. A well-exercised judgment in reference to this part of divine doctrine was necessary for appreciating the high theme of Christ's priesthood. — Slothfulness in religion dwarfs our powers, and robs us of the advantages and enjoyments of Christian maturity. — Advancement in Christian knowl-

CHAPTER VI.

¹ THEREFORE, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith

edge and in the Christian life produces an acuteness of spiritual perception which greatly aids discrimination in matters both of doctrine and of conduct. We thus also go forward from strength to strength "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." See Eph. iv. 13-16.

CHAPTER VI.

This chapter opens with an exhortation, vs. 1-3, to proceed from the elementary stage, spoken of in the preceding chapter, to maturity of Christian knowledge. — This exhortation is enforced by distinctly warning the Hebrews of the danger, to which their present lack of religious earnestness exposed them, of falling away from their discipleship, and of becoming hopeless apostates from Jesus, vs. 4-6.

1. *Therefore*; that is, Since you have been disciples of Christ sufficiently long to have become teachers of his doctrine, but through sluggishness have lost ground and need to be again taught the very rudiments of the gospel, let us now leave this rudimental stage, and advance to the maturity requisite for completeness of knowledge. — The writer here takes the attitude of a teacher solicitous to conduct his pupils to a forward stage of spiritual ability. While proposing thus to lead them forward, he associates himself with them and invites them to accompany him. || *Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ*; leaving the elements of Christian doctrine, the very beginnings or starting-points of Christian teaching. See on v. 12. || *Let us go on unto perfection*; let us carry ourselves forward, as the original might be expressed, *to maturity*. Perfection is here that stage or condition of *maturity*, fulness of age, v. 14, to which the *solid food* of advanced

instruction is suited, as distinguished from the infantile stage, at which only the *milk* of instruction would be suitable. From this elementary stage the writer invites his Hebrew brethren to advance with him to the stage of maturity, he going forward as their guiding teacher, they as his scholars accompanying him. || *Not laying again the foundation*. The foundation of their Christian instruction had already been laid at the beginning of their professed discipleship, and their religious edification ought to have been far advanced. Hence the writer wishes that he may not be under the necessity of laying again for them this foundation, and that they may not be again employed with that work. The laying of the foundation for a structure is indeed indispensable; but that is only the commencing work, and it must give place to the rearing of the edifice. To be always laying the foundation, or to be again and again laying it, would be *childish*; we ought rather to be going onward like *men*. — The things composing the foundation on which the spiritual structure is to rest, in other words, the topics which comprise the principles, the elements, of Christian teaching, are next mentioned. They are six in number, and may be grouped together in three pairs: repentance and faith in God, baptism and the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. These entered into the earliest experience and profession of the Christian converts; and the converts were to proceed from these to advanced instructions and attainments. || *Repentance from dead works*. Dead works are such as have no vitality in them for good, are fruitless of good, consequently *sinful*. Genuine repentance is a turning away from such works, with heart-felt sorrow, and entering on a life of obedience to

toward God,² of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal

God. || *Faith toward God* ; strictly, *faith on or in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21, Mark xi. 22; true belief in him and in his declarations. This will insure a cordial reception of all his communications, and obedience to all his known will. It means here, particularly, faith in him as having fulfilled his long-standing promise of the coming of the Messiah, who appeared, at length, in the person of Jesus as the Saviour of men.—Such repentance and faith had been enjoined at the very commencement of the gospel, and were constantly inculcated as the very first requisites for obtaining its blessings. See Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; Mark i. 15; Acts ii. 38; xvi. 31; xx. 21; Heb. xi. 6. These two were matters of personal experience, and lay at the foundation of Christian character.

2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms.* The teaching concerning baptism was also a primary matter, pertaining to the earliest stage of the Christian life, since baptism was the appointed public avowal of a person's having become a believer in Christ. Special instruction as to this duty was therefore necessary to the convert at the earliest stage; and particularly would it seem requisite, in the case of Hebrews who had become believers in Jesus, that they should understand the difference between the numerous ablutions required in the Jewish law for ceremonial purification, and the Christian rite of baptism,—the same word *baptism*, in its primary and literal signification, being applicable both to the Jewish observances and to the Christian rite, and there being some hazard of failing to apprehend the distinctive spiritual significance of Christian baptism. It might, also, have been necessary, at the time when this epistle was written, to give such instruction to recent converts as would free them from all mistakes concerning the baptism which John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, administered. The case of the twelve disciples found in Corinth by the apostle Paul, as related in Acts

xix. 1-7, who had not been properly instructed in reference to baptism, probably exemplified many cases in which the distinction between John's baptism and that under the apostles needed explanation. The case of Apollos, also, who at first "knew only the baptism of John," but was afterwards taught "the way of God more perfectly," Acts xviii. 24-26, shows the necessity, at that early period, of such instruction. In consequence of these several *immersions*, or baptisms, for religious purposes, the word *baptisms* in the plural number is used; and in order that the Christian convert might make an intelligent avowal of his faith in Christ, it would seem that a convert from among the Jews, particularly, should be taught respecting *baptisms* of which he knew, that he might discriminate between them, and apprehend the distinctive significance of Christian baptism and the obligations which it involved. || *The laying on of hands.* The laying of hands by the apostles on baptized persons was a preliminary to such persons' receiving the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. See Acts viii. 15-18; xix. 5, 6. This visible act may have grown into a customary observance at the baptism of converts generally, since, as being an emblem of the bestowal of blessings, it was expressive of the Holy Spirit's influence having been imparted to them and still to be imparted, whether for miraculous operations or for preservation and growth in spiritual life. It would also serve in all cases as a visible acknowledgment of the person's admission into the company of Christ's followers, on whom the gift of the Holy Spirit was bestowed.—To these two matters of incipient Christian experience, and these two outward acts connected with the profession of discipleship, two points of doctrine are added as avowed at the very commencement of the Christian life. || *Resurrection of the dead.* This was a primary or elementary principle of

judgment. ³ And this will we do, if God permit. ⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and

the gospel, inasmuch as it was in the gospel that it was first disclosed with perfect clearness, and the denial of it was virtually a denial of the future life and retribution, and would thus be fatal to morality and religion. See John v. 28, 29; Acts xxiv. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 32; 2 Tim. i. 10; ii. 16-18. || *Eternal judgment*; the final judgment of men, the decisions of which will be irreversible and the results eternal. Matt. xxv. 46; Rom. ii. 5-10; 2 Cor. v. 10.

3. *And this will we do, if God permit.* This advance to ripeness of understanding in Christian truth we will make, I as your teacher leading you on to this forward position, and you following me to it, if God permit. Not that there was any doubt of its being pleasing to God that the Hebrew brethren should shake off their lethargy, and set themselves earnestly to the good work of making progress; but it was manifestly proper devoutly to acknowledge man's dependence on God for right purposes and their fulfilment, as well as for continuance of life and outward good. For nearly the same expression, namely, *if the Lord permit*, see 1 Cor. xvi. 7. Compare James iv. 15, "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that;" Prov. iii. 6, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

4. The exhortation to press forward to the mature stage of Christian attainments is enforced by the additional consideration that those who, instead of advancing, abide still in infantile weakness, are in danger of falling a prey to men who would seduce them from the gospel; and, should they renounce Jesus after having felt the power of his gospel, their recovery to repentance would be hopeless. — *For it is impossible*, etc. The impossibility, here asserted, of bringing to renewed repentance the class of persons described would arise from their having renounced the only Saviour and declined the benefit of the only scheme of salvation which God has ap-

pointed, and that not in ignorance, but with knowledge. No more extensive or more affecting exhibition of divine mercy can be made, than has been made by the Son of God in his teachings and in the sacrifice of himself for men's pardon and salvation. If God's method for saving men through him be spurned by any who have felt its influences, surely no ground of hope for additional or greater mercy remains. Should they fall away from Jesus, and from the instructions, promises, and threatenings of his gospel, no reasonable basis would remain for a hope of their again forsaking sin, and entering on a life of righteousness. No higher, no different influences could be employed than those which they had already felt, and from which they had turned away. The gospel comprising, and carrying forward to perfection, all the vital principles of the Old Testament religion, making known the Saviour and the appointed method of salvation, is the only and the final system of religious truth by means of which God brings men to repentance. If this then be rejected, and all its merciful provisions, its promises, and the hopes which it proposes, be spurned as unworthy of confidence, particularly by any who have seen and felt its power, no clearer light can be given to such, no weightier motives or considerations can be urged, no additional method be employed; and as men come to repentance not in a mechanical way, but through an intelligent and felt conviction of the truths of the gospel, no ground for hope remains that those who slight and disown Christ, after experiencing the present blessings of his gospel, will be recovered to repentance. The guilt, too, of such persons is beyond atonement; no sacrifice remains of sufficient efficacy to reach their case; for what sacrifice can be more acceptable to God and more efficacious for securing his mercy and influencing the hearts of men than that of his Son? Specially, what

have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of

sacrifice can atone for the guilt of casting contempt on that sacrifice? It is the case of apostates that this passage contemplates; and the apostasy is a hopeless one, such persons really classing themselves with those Jews who actually crucified Jesus and covered him with ignominy, thus virtually endorsing and repeating this ignominy. The case is substantially the same as is stated in x. 26-31, "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," etc. As no sacrifice remains which might be offered, the guilt of such sin must still remain: reconciliation with God is hopeless, there being no basis for it. The case is also of the same nature as that stated in ii. 3, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," since, in this last-quoted passage, it is not persons who make no profession of religious character that are addressed, but the Hebrew Christians themselves. The language in this last-quoted passage is indeed far milder, for the writer becomes more intensive in feeling and in language as he proceeds in developing his subject and in unfolding the guilt and hazard of undervaluing the gracious provision which God has made for men in the sacrifice and mediation of his Son. The case of *presumptuous sins*, so called in the Old Testament, — see note on v. 2, — is parallel to this. No sacrifice was appointed under the ancient economy for such sins; the offender was to be certainly cut off and to perish without hope, because he had deliberately and of set purpose contemned the authority of Jehovah; and having in mind and heart disavowed the true God and refused the appointed methods of procuring his favor, what ground of hope could there be for him, either as to the removal of his liability to punishment, or as to his becoming a truly righteous man? In the view of such a transgressor, the authority of Jehovah was naught, his favor was naught. Transgressions of

such a character really, for all practical purposes, annihilated the idea of the true God, disowned any authority claimed for him, and left no basis for repentance and recovery, through sacrifice or any other way, to his favor. See Num. xv. 30, 31. — *|| Those who were once enlightened.* This appears to have been a usual designation of the followers of Christ, as having been called out of darkness into marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9; out of the ignorance, sinfulness, and unhappiness of their former state to the knowledge, piety, and joy which Christ, the Light of the world, bestows. See John i. 9; viii. 12; ix. 5. The Ephesian Christians accordingly are characterized, Eph. i. 18, as having the eyes of their understanding enlightened. See, also, Eph. v. 8; Heb. x. 32. Compare John iii. 19-21; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Luke xvi. 8; John xii. 35, 36; 1 Thess. v. 5. *|| Have tasted of the heavenly gift;* the gift from heaven, the gift of God's grace, or favorable regard, shown in his acceptance of those who are justified through faith in Christ, and in his giving spiritual strength and joy. See Rom. v. 13, 17; Eph. iii. 7. *To taste of the heavenly gift of God's grace is, to partake of it, to try it so as to know it by experience, to enjoy it.* Compare Ps. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 3. — *The Holy Spirit is often spoken of as the gift of God.* See Luke xi. 13; Acts ii. 38; viii. 20; x. 45; xi. 17. As, however, *partaking of the Holy Spirit* is especially mentioned in the next clause, it seems better to explain the *heavenly gift* in a broader sense. *|| Were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.* Reference is here made to the miraculous powers which were bestowed on the primitive believers, and, as would seem by the connection, to the influence of the Spirit in enlightening the minds of men and converting them to faith and hope in Christ, Acts ii. 38; viii. 15-19; x. 44-47; xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 8-11.

5. *And have tasted the good word of*

God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶ if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put

God; have received and enjoyed God's word of promise to believers in Christ. || *The powers of the world to come.* See on ii. 5. By the phrase *world to come*, as used among the Jews, the times of the Messiah were designated previously to his advent: it indicated the *new order of things* which was to be introduced by the Messiah, to be consummated at the final judgment, and to be of endless duration. This expression, though, before the advent of Christ, indicative of what was then future, would naturally be retained as an epithet after his advent; particularly as the development of the period was still future, and its consummated glory was to take place in the eternal world. The Christian dispensation, then, is here intended, with its vast increase beyond all preceding dispensations in the revelation of God's purposes, for men's spiritual good and in its adaptation to fit men for eternal life and its so intimate connection with the eternal state. The instructions, promises, and threatenings brought by the Christian dispensation pertain to men's spiritual and immortal nature, and thus the invisible, everlasting state of men is included in the expression. The *powers* of this *world to come* are the miraculous displays of God's *power*, by which he testified to the genuineness of the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God; also, the elevating and stirring *force* of the truths so clearly made known by Jesus and his apostles concerning the future world; likewise, the *stimulating* hopes and joys awakened in those who embraced the instructions of Christ. Compare ii. 4. See, also, 1 Cor. iv. 20; 1 Thess. i. 5. Those who witnessed and who participated in these accompanying and these inherent powers of the new dispensation, not only had strong rational evidences of its truth, but had also grounds for admiration and joy, which we of the present time, who are instructed in the gospel from childhood, can scarcely appreciate.

6. *If they shall fall away*; literally, *having fallen away*, or, agreeably to the mode of translation adopted in the preceding verses, *who have fallen away*; who have apostatized from Jesus and renounced the promises and hopes of his religion, giving preference to a different leader, as, for instance, in the case of professed Hebrew Christians giving preference to Moses and the Jewish religion as taught by the Jewish rabbins of their time, thus abandoning Jesus, and refusing all further connection with him. Such was the falling away from Jesus which this epistle was designed to prevent; a falling away, whether to a renewed acceptance of the errors and delusions which had usurped the name of the Mosaic religion, and which could give no rational hope of salvation, or to entire recklessness in regard to religion. || *To renew them again unto repentance*; to recover them again to penitence and a pious life. || *Seeing they crucify*, etc.; literally, *crucifying again to themselves* the Son of God, and exposing him to open shame. By falling away from Jesus they virtually for themselves, and so far as they are concerned, join with those who crucified him, and thus, as it were, repeat their act, and heap fresh ignominy on him, as if he were a mere pretender, deserving, instead of the confidence and homage of men, only their execration and their rejection of his claims. Thus rejecting Jesus and publicly pouring contempt on him, they cut themselves off from the possibility of a renewed repentance unto life, since such repentance is effected only through his religion, and for such guilt as they would contract no pardoning provision was made. A rejecter of Christ cannot be savingly benefited by the religion of Christ; and beyond the pale of this religion there is no ground for hope of pardon and peace with God.

The paragraph which we have just

him to an open shame. ⁷ For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: ⁸ but that which beareth thorns and briers is re-

considered is only one of several passages breathing the same sentiment. It shows how imminent was the danger of those Hebrews, and how deep the writer's solicitude for them in the languid state of their religious affections and purposes, and in the poverty of their Christian knowledge. See ii. 3; iii. 12-14; iv. 1; x. 26-31, 35, 38; xii. 15, 25. The principle applicable to all, without exception, that without holiness no one shall see the Lord, xii. 14, is here applied to the case of those who were avowedly Christians. Of the same tenor, though not so vividly expressed, is our Lord's declaration, Matt. x. 22, "He that *endureth to the end* shall be saved;" also the declaration in Rom. ii. 7, that eternal life will be awarded to those who, by *patient continuance* in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality; as also the faithful saying in 2 Tim. ii. 12, "If we *deny* him, he also will deny us." Compare, likewise, Rom. xiv. 15; 1 Cor. viii. 11; x. 12; Gal. iv. 9-11; v. 1-4; Col. i. 21-23; ii. 6-8; 2 Pet. ii. 20-22; Rev. iii. 16. If it be asked whether an apostate, becoming afterwards convinced of his error and sin, would be beyond the pale of hope, if he should in a penitent spirit seek forgiveness through Jesus, the answer is easy. Such a case is altogether unlikely, in view of the depraved temper of mind which apostasy involves, and of the insensibility to religious obligations, to the mercy and love of God, and to the pure and ennobling hopes which the gospel imparts. According to all human probabilities, it will not occur. But should it occur, and the sin consequently be not persisted in, but abandoned, such a case, notwithstanding the enormity of wickedness chargeable to the person who, by the supposition, has become penitent, would come within the range of our Lord's merciful declaration in

John vi. 37, "Him that cometh unto me I will in *no wise* cast out."

7. An illustration of the sentiment expressed in verses 4-6 now follows, showing that we must profit by our religious advantages, if we would stand in favor with God; but that, on the contrary, certain doom awaits us, if we yield no fruit of righteousness in return for our advantages.—*For the earth*, more properly *land*; that is, a piece of land, a plat of ground. || *Herbs*; plants. || *By whom it is dressed*; more properly, *for whom, on account of whom*, it is also cultivated by the husbandman, in addition to the rain which it receives from heaven. || *Receiveth blessing from God*. God regards it with delight and pronounces it blessed; declares his pleasure in it. Reference seems had here to the expression of pleasure on the part of God in the various objects of creation, agreeably to Gen. i. 10, 12, 31, "And God saw that it was good." A field covered with fragrant blossoms, or abounding in fruit, is also represented as the object of God's delight, in Gen. xxvii. 27, 'It is a field which the Lord hath blessed.' See, also, Ezek. xxxiv. 26, "And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing." The delight which we feel in looking over a well-cultivated and luxuriant field is, by a figure, transferred to God; so that he is represented as pleased with it, and pronouncing on it words of blessing.

8. *But that which beareth thorns and briers*. The form of expression in the original, and the purpose of the illustration, both show that it is the same plat of ground above described, that is still before the writer's mind; if, instead of useful plants, it bear only thorns and briers, and is, therefore, a useless plat, making no suitable re-

jected, and *is nigh unto cursing*; whose end *is to be burned*.

⁹ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

¹⁰ For God *is not unrighteous to forget your work and la-*

turn for the showers which God sent on it, and for the labor of its cultivator, then it does not receive a blessing, but is *rejected*; is pronounced worthless after the abundant trial of its qualities. || *Is nigh unto cursing*. A curse, instead of a blessing, is ready to be pronounced on it; its doom is at hand. || *Whose end is to be burned*. The curse of its proprietor, which is just ready to be uttered, dooms it to be burned up; instead of being further enriched and cultivated, it is devoted to the flames: as if the proprietor, in despair of ever receiving profit from it, should order, Spend no more labor on it; give it to the flames. Compare, with reference to a country given up to burning, Deut. xxix. 23.—In applying this illustration, we ought to rest in the simple fact of the land being devoted to flames; any questions as to what might be done afterwards, and whether the land itself was to be burned, or only its hurtful products, are irrelevant to the design of the illustration, and only hinder the proper apprehension of the passage. Scripture illustrations, like those of common life, are directed to the point in hand, and should not be extended to all possible lengths, or in all possible directions; and here, evidently, *the point* is the abandonment of the worthless ground and its being given up to the fire as useless, as not holding out a hope of good results to the labors of a cultivator.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. The condition of such as contentedly remain at a low degree of religious knowledge, and in a languid state of religious affection, is exceedingly dangerous. 2. Progress in piety is necessary in order to a well-established Christian hope, to the successful resistance of temptation, and the final attainment of eternal life. 3. The piety which wears well and ends well is alone worthy to be trusted as having

the promise of the life to come. 4. Our religious advantages are our spiritual capital: let us trade well with it, and it will yield us ample interest; but if we abuse or neglect it, we shall become sadly bankrupt. "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Matt. xxv. 29; xiii. 12.

9-20. Having thus earnestly warned the Hebrews of their danger, the writer adopts a strain of encouragement, expressing his strong hopefulness of their salvation, and ascribing his solicitude to his desire for their diligent pursuit of the objects of Christian hope and for their emulating those who through faith and persevering obedience have attained to the promised heavenly blessings. Such faith and perseverance he encourages by the example of Abraham, and by the unwavering adherence of God to his promises.

9. *We are persuaded better things of you—though we thus speak*. Even though I have spoken in such words of fearful warning, I trust you are still in the way to salvation.

10. *For God is not unrighteous*, etc. The ground on which his confidence concerning them rests, is, that God, as being righteous, would acknowledge and accept the Christian deeds which they had performed, and the love for himself which they had shown. Their love to him and their deeds of kindness to distressed Christians, both in former years and at present, God would not forget, but would appropriately recompense.—Love to God and to his people, manifested in suitable deeds, is not, indeed, the *ground of salvation*, but it is a good ground for a *favorable judgment* of professed followers of Christ in regard to their salvation, inasmuch as it results from a renewed heart. Benevolent deeds, preceeding from a right heart, are not only ac-

bor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: ¹² that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³ For when God made

ceptable to God, but are deemed by him suitable to be recompensed. Rom. ii. 6; Matt. xxv. 34-40. — Good critical editions of the Greek Testament omit the word which is here rendered *labor*, and present the original thus: For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye have shown to his name, — thus mentioning *deeds* performed and *love* to God manifested. || *And do minister*. Their kind deeds in behalf of Christians whose circumstances required aid were not confined to the past, but were still habitually performed. Compare x. 32-34; xiii. 3. — There is no real contrariety between the cautionary language in verses 4-6 and the confidence here expressed as to the final salvation of the Hebrew Christians; for, first, the past and the continued evidence furnished by them of sincere love to God and faith in Christ encouraged the belief that they would, as a community, *abide* in this love and faith, and endure to the end, notwithstanding the vacillating spirit which not a few of them had manifested; secondly, their former and continued faith and obedience encouraged the belief that He who had begun a good work in them would complete it. Phil. i. 6. — However strong the belief might be that, by the grace of God, and according to his unchangeable purpose, their faith and obedience would issue in eternal life; yet, as they were Christians not by compulsion, but in the use of their natural faculties, and were liable to temptations which might prove an overmatch for their unaided power, they ought obviously to be reminded that perdition would be the inevitable result of forsaking Christ; this would arouse their cautiousness and contribute to steadfastness in following Christ,

and thus would coincide with the purpose of God to save those who are justified by the blood of Christ, Rom. v. 9, 10, and would be a means for effectuating this purpose.

11. *And we desire*, etc.; more correctly, *But we desire*. The writer here unfolds the reason for his solicitude respecting the Hebrews, and for his boldness in warning them. It was not because he was ready to abandon his hope of their salvation, but because he felt an earnest desire that, as they had formerly been diligent in deeds of kindness and in manifesting love to the name of God, so every one of them, without exception, would arouse himself to unceasing diligence in maintaining, and advancing to confirmation, the hope in Christ. || *Unto the end*. These words are connected in sense with the words *do show the same diligence*; and they impress the oft-repeated sentiment of this epistle, that we must be faithful unto death in order to receive the crown of life. Rev. ii. 10.

12. *That ye be not slothful*; literally, *That ye become not slothful*. The writer thus shows his delicate feelings and his ever-present aim to win his brethren by kindness. He wished that they would not remit their former diligence, but steadily follow in the track of the pious dead, imitating their persevering fidelity to God, and pursuit of heavenly good. || *Who through faith and patience inherit the promises*; who through faith in God's declarations and patient continuance in obeying him, Luke viii. 15; Matt. xiii. 23, are now in actual possession of the heavenly blessings promised to those who believe and obey God.

13. The certainty that perseverance in faith and obedience will issue in receiving the promised blessings is

promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For

now argued from the fact that God appended to his promises an oath, and from the example of Abraham, whose patient confidence in the fulfilment of God's promises was amply recompensed.

— *For when God made promise to Abraham.* Reference is here had to the series of promises made to Abraham, as recorded in Gen. xii. 2, 3, 7; xiii. 14-17; xvii. 4-8; xviii. 18; xxii. 16-18. These promises had a spiritual, as well as a secular, significance; they included heavenly good. The earthly prosperity, consisting of a numerous posterity and of wide-spread possession of the world, was only the preliminary and visible part, emblematic or typical of the spiritual and eternal good which the promises really embraced. — The manner in which the New Testament writers speak of the promises made to Abraham shows that those promises were understood as thus extensive. They were considered as valid for the spiritual posterity of Abraham; that is, for believers in all ages. The followers of Christ, accordingly, were regarded as partakers with believing Abraham in the blessings bestowed through Christ, who was, eminently, **THAT ONE** of his posterity, or **THAT SEED**, in whom all nations were to be blessed. See Rom. iv. 11, 16; Gal. iii. 7, 9, 14, 16, 29. || *He swore by himself.* See Gen. xxii. 16: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord." — By the solemn and irreversible language of an oath, God gave Abraham the strongest assurance that his promises would be fulfilled.

14. *Saying, Surely, etc.* See Gen. xxii. 17. The blessing here premised was indefinite, and included all real good, earthly and heavenly: and the promise to multiply Abraham's posterity had respect, ultimately, to his spiritual posterity, that is, to believers of all times, as well as to his natural descendants.

15. *And so; that is, And being*

thus situated, having promises and an oath from God. || *After he had patiently endured, etc.;* having patiently confided in the promises of God, notwithstanding all unfavorable appearances, he at length obtained the promise; that is, the promised blessing. — God had repeatedly promised to Abraham a numerous posterity, Gen. xii. 2, 3; xiii. 16; xvii. 4-6; xviii. 18; which was to descend through Isaac, Gen. xvii. 19; xxi. 12. The birth of Isaac commenced the visible fulfilment of the promise; but subsequently God required the sacrificing of Isaac, which requisition appeared entirely adverse to his expectations: yet he still believed the declaration of God, Heb. xi. 17-19. The requisition for sacrificing Isaac was revoked, and the continued life of Isaac in such circumstances might well be considered as enfolding in itself the entire accomplishment of all the promises of God. Abraham also lived after this event sufficiently long to see all the providential arrangements made for the full accomplishment of the divine promise. See Gen. xxiv.; xxv. 5-8.

16. The design of God, in swearing to Abraham by himself, had its ground in the usage among men of employing the oath: *For men verily swear by the greater;* that is, by One greater than themselves, namely, God; thus by an appeal to his omniscience avowing their perfect truthfulness, and by an appeal to his justice and almighty power avowing their expectation of being doomed by him to merited punishment, should they utter a false declaration, or not abide by their engagements. Since this is the practice among men, God condescended to give in this manner binding force to his promise, and to confirm Abraham's belief in its fulfilment. From the nature of the case, however, he, being supreme over all, could swear only by himself. || *And an oath — an end of*

men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. ¹⁷ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: ¹⁹ which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure

all strife; and on any occasions of dispute, or strife, among men, the oath which is taken is an end to the strife, and leads to a confirmed settlement of the matter. The oath, unless there is ground for suspecting the crime of perjury, gives final assurance in regard to a matter in dispute; it is held of an obligatory nature, and is finally decisive. Compare Gen. xxi. 22-24; 1 Sam. xix. 6; 1s. liv. 9; Matt. xiv. 7.

17. *Wherein*; that is, in accordance with which usage; or, on which account; on account of an oath being employed among men to give assurance and to place a matter beyond controversy or doubt. || *God, willing more abundantly*, etc.; God, out of regard to man's weakness and liability to distrust, desiring, by "assurance made doubly sure," to show unto the heirs of promise; more correctly, heirs of the promise. — *The promise* is here used collectively for the promises made to Abraham, which might be considered as comprised in the one promise to bless him, since this included all the kinds of good which God purposed to bestow, and, among these, eternal life in heaven. — *The heirs of the promise* are those who were to possess the promised blessing; namely, Abraham and his pious natural descendants, Rom. iv. 12; and all his spiritual posterity, Rom. iv. 11, namely, all of every nation and age who should, like him, have an obedient faith in God, and do his will, which was in due time to be fully revealed in the gospel of Christ. All true disciples of Christ are reckoned among the heirs of the promise made to Abraham, since they resemble him in the faith with which he rejoiced in the promised advent of Christ, John

viii. 56. || *The immutability of his counsel*; his unchangeable will, or purpose. || *Confirmed it with an oath*; strictly translated, *he interposed*, came between the two parties, himself and those to whom the promises were made, *with an oath*. Having taken the position of a promiser, he then took the position of one who bound himself by the very strongest oath to fulfil the promise.

18. *That by two immutable things*, etc., a promise and an oath, which by their nature and circumstances are ordinarily regarded as unchangeable, not liable to be reversed, but held as inviolable. || *In which it was impossible for God to lie*. Though man may, through pressure of circumstances, or fickleness, or original intent to deceive, show himself false, God, from the infinite rectitude of his nature, and his supremacy above all circumstances and adverse influences, and his independence and control of all creatures and agencies, cannot by any possibility falsify his word. Compare Tit. i. 2. || *Who have fled*, etc.; who have fled from the wrath to come, Matt. iii. 7; Luke iii. 7-9, so as to take hold on and make sure of the hope which Christ proposes to us of heavenly good, or eternal life, the rest with God in heaven. Christ holds out the hope of eternal life: to him we must flee if we would escape the perils to which sin exposes us, and putting our confidence in him, as the leader to salvation, we have effectual consolation in all our distresses.

19. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul*, etc. An anchor keeps the vessel steady, prevents it from drifting away, helps to weather a

and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil :
²⁰ whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made a High-priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

storm; in short, keeps it in a safe position. So the hope of heavenly good through Christ is the soul's anchor amid all its dangers, keeping it steady and safe, helping it to outride the storms of temptation by which it may be assailed. It is the only effectual safeguard of the soul while on earth. || *Sure,—steadfast,—which entereth, etc.* These terms relate not to the word *anchor*, but to *hope*. This hope, an anchor of the soul, is *sure*, not liable to fail; it is *steadfast*, firm, unyielding, as fixing its hold on the ever-firm declaration of God; it *entereth into that within the veil*, since it reaches forward to heaven. In the phrase *that within the veil* allusion is made to that recess in the Jewish tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, which was named *the most holy place*, or *the holy of holies*. This was separated by a veil, or curtain, from the *holy place*, that is, the outer sanctuary, Ex. xxvi. 33. Into this inner apartment, beyond the sanctuary, only the high-priest was allowed to enter, and even he only one day in the year, the day of annual atonement for the nation. It was regarded as the place of Jehovah's special presence; and hence it was considered an emblem of heaven. Consequently, *that within the veil* means the place of God's abode, heaven.

20. *Whither the forerunner, etc.;* to which most holy abode of God, represented by the interior recess of the tabernacle, Jesus has gone beforehand in our behalf, having become our abiding High-priest. || *Forever;* from age to age, through all generations. His priesthood is an abiding one, held ever by himself, not transmitted to another person. The Jewish high-priest's office was necessarily successive, passing from one incumbent to another on account of death. Not so with Jesus, who has entered beforehand into heaven, as our Leader and our perpetual, ever-living, ever-acting High-priest. — The word *forever* was not yet partic-

ularly dwelt on by the writer, since the thought conveyed by it belonged to a more advanced part of his argument, as one of the points in proving the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of Aaron. He seems, however, to have felt it important to keep the expression before his readers' minds. || *After the order of Melchizedek.* See on v. 6. — The writer thus terminates his hortatory address by again distinctly bringing Jesus to view in the capacity of a High-priest officiating for his followers in the immediate presence of God; a High-priest, also, bearing a marked resemblance to Melchizedek and occupying a higher priestly rank than the high-priests of Aaron's time. To the consideration of Christ, in this exalted capacity, he next directs attention.

CHAPTER VII.

Having repeatedly mentioned Jesus as the High-priest according to the rank of Melchizedek, v. 6, 10; vi. 20, the writer now proceeds formally to consider Jesus as occupying this position. After alluding to the few historical particulars in the sacred records concerning Melchizedek, he points out several striking coincidences, official and personal, between him and Jesus. As the thought that Jesus had been made a high-priest *forever*, like Melchizedek, was particularly prominent in the writer's mind, he confirms this thought by the coincidence between the two in this respect; *for* Melchizedek abideth a priest *continually*. Vs. 1-3.

He next directs attention to the *greatness* of Melchizedek in his priestly capacity. He was so great that even Abraham, the patriarch of the Hebrew nation, gave tithes to him, vs. 4. Again, while the Levitical priests have the great honor of receiving tithes from the descendants of Abraham, Melchizedek has the greater

CHAPTER VII.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most

honor of having received tithes from Abraham himself, and of having pronounced a blessing on him, vs. 5-7. Thus an additional proof is given of Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham, in connection with a proof of his superiority to the Levitical priests.—The Levitical priests, also, who receive tithes, are but *dying* men; while Melchizedek is testified of only as a *living* person, vs. 8. Moreover, the progenitor of these priests, Levi, has, through Abraham, given tithes to Melchizedek, and thus acknowledged Melchizedek's superiority to him and his descendants, vs. 9, 10. — The superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical priests, to any one or to all of them, virtually proves the superiority of Jesus to those priests, for Jesus was of the rank of Melchizedek.

From the fact that Jesus is become the High-priest, it follows that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect; for it would not have been changed and given place to a different priesthood, if it had furnished a perfect expiation and secured a perfect state of holiness and glory for men, vs. 11. Since the Levitical priesthood was established in vital connection with the Law, and was regulated by the Law, such a change in the priesthood as the introduction of a priest of a different order, or rank, involved a change, also, of the Law. The fact that Jesus has become the High-priest, has brought about that change of the Law, inasmuch as in *his* becoming High-priest the Mosaic law was not followed; for Jesus belonged to a tribe from which, according to that Law, a priest could not be selected, vs. 12-14. Still further; that it was not in accordance with an external, ineffectual economy, such as the Mosaic, that Jesus is made High-priest, but in accordance with an economy having power to bestow endless life, is clear; because he is made a Priest *forever*, vs. 16, 17. — The Mosaic law, then, is superseded by a sys-

tem capable of securing eternal life: it is set aside, for it carried nothing to perfection; and a better ground of hope, by which we draw near to God for mercy and grace, is introduced, vs. 18, 19.

Also, Jesus was made a Priest with the solemnity of an oath on the part of God, and thus with a sanction transcending that of the Levitical priesthood; in this same transcending degree, the covenant, of which he is become the surety, is better than the Mosaic, and he consequently a High-priest superior to the Levitical, vs. 20-22. — Still further; the priesthood of Jesus is superior, since he abides *forever*, and thus has an unchangeable priesthood, one which abides in his own person, and does not pass from him to another; whence he is able to save completely all who come to God through him, because he is ever-living so as to intercede for them, vs. 23-25.

It was, moreover, eminently befitting that such a High-priest as Jesus has been described to be in preceding parts of this chapter, also in ii. 17, 18, iv. 14, 15, v. 9, should be appointed for us; one free from every taint of sin and all contact with sinners, and exalted on high, not needing to offer up *repeatedly* sacrifices for himself first and then for the people, since his once offering up of himself for the people is all-sufficient; for the priests appointed by the Law were only men burdened with a consciousness of sin; but the divine declaration confirmed by the oath, which was subsequent to the Law and therefore set it aside, appoints as High-priest THE SON OF GOD, exalted to the perfection of his heavenly dignity forever, vs. 26-28.

1-3. *For this Melchizedek — abideth a priest continually.* At entering on the discussion of the high-priesthood of Jesus as contrasted with the Levitical high-priesthood, the transition from the last verso of the preceding chapter to the present paragraph is very

high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; ²to whom also Abraham

natural. The thought of Jesus' having become a High-priest *forever* after the order of Melchizedek had been expressed. In confirmation of that thought, and as showing a resemblance between Melchizedek and him, Melchizedek is now presented to our notice as *abiding a priest continually*. In this respect, as in various others, the coincidence between the two is very observable. The statement is not an *argument* in proof of the perpetuity of Christ's priesthood, no argument being needed, since its perpetuity was made known in the divine appointment of Christ to this office. This point was not a matter for reasoning; but the coincidence in this respect between Melchizedek and Jesus needed to be distinctly stated as confirming the point, and as unfolding one of the essential elements of Christ's priesthood which had not been sufficiently well apprehended. It is indeed the chief point, both of resemblance to Melchizedek and of contrast with the Levitical priests, which the writer was seeking to impress on the Hebrews. This attribute of perpetuity belonged, in a certain sense, to Melchizedek; so, too, Jesus is, in a still higher sense, an enduring Priest; his office extends throughout all ages, so long as his followers shall need a high-priest. — Before distinctly mentioning this culminating point of resemblance, the writer recalls the brief historical account, Gen. xiv. 18-20, in which Melchizedek is so honorably commemorated, and then, in suggesting points of resemblance between him and Jesus which were involved in the declaration, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, gives the explanation of his name and of his kingly title, and directs special attention to the remarkable fact that this king-priest appears without father, without mother, without beginning, and without ending, of life. Thus he is made, in the remarkable providence of God, like unto the Son of God, who is really without beginning and with-

out ending. What was really true in reference to the Son of God has a counterpart in Melchizedek by the position in which the providence of God, according to the sacred records, places him. When he first appears in the sacred records, he is presented to us as a king and a priest of the most high God; and no information is given as to his parentage, his birth, or his death. So far as human knowledge goes, the case is as if he had no parents and never ceased to live, or to be a king-priest. Now, what is true of him in a certain view is really and literally true of Jesus, the Son of God; and Melchizedek is a signal type of the Son of God, who is become the King-priest of his followers. — The only account which we have concerning Melchizedek is found in Gen. xiv. 18-20. He is there called "king of Salem" and "the priest of the most high God." On the return of Abraham from a successful expedition against the five confederate kings into whose hands Lot, Abraham's nephew, had fallen, he met Abraham with a present of bread and wine, and pronounced a blessing on him in language indicative of intelligent and sincere piety; and Abraham gave to him tithes of all the goods he had captured. — Melchizedek appears to have been a king of one of the tribes in ancient Palestine, and Salem to have been the city of his residence. In the midst of the prevailing depravity and idolatry, he maintained the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and, according to a practice which was observed in patriarchal times, he was the priest as well as the king of his people.

2. *Abraham gave a tenth part of all; gave even a tithe of all; went so far as to give tithes*, Gen. xiv. 20. — The practice of tithing, or setting apart a tenth of all income as an offering to God, for the support of priests and for the service of religion, is very ancient. The tenth of all was considered due to God as an expression of gratitude to him, the bestower of all

gave a tenth part of all ; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace ; ³ without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but

good, and an acknowledgment of his sovereignty as God over all, entitled to homage from all men and in regard to all things. — On the occasion here mentioned, Abraham gave the tenth of his spoils to Melchizedek as being the priest of the Most High, and entitled to what was considered as the Lord's portion. Such was the significance of tithing among the Hebrews as regulated by the Mosaic law ; God claimed as his own the tenth of all income, Lev. xxvii. 30, and this, together with various offerings, Num. xviii. 8, was given to the priests and Levites for their support, since the tribe of Levi, being set apart for the service of religion, had no possessions in common with the other tribes. See Num. xviii. 20-32. — The poor, also, were to receive a portion from the tithes, Deut. xiv. 29. || *Being by interpretation*, etc. The name *Melchizedek*, according to the meaning of the two words of which it is composed, signifies *king of righteousness* ; that is, a righteous king. || *King of Salem, which is*, etc. The Hebrew word *Salem* signifies *peace*. Melchizedek's character corresponded to the meaning of his title: he was *king of peace* ; that is, a peaceful king. Agreeably to the meaning of his name, and of his kingly title, he was righteous and peaceful ; a becoming type of that King who was to reign in righteousness, Is. xxxii. 1 ; ix. 7 ; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 ; Zech. ix. 9 ; and to be Prince of peace, Is. ix. 6.

3. *Without father, without mother* ; not really so, but historically, since the sacred records give us no knowledge of his parentage. No man knows who was his father, or who was his mother. Viewed in all the light which the sacred history imparts concerning him, he stands alone, not a word being spoken of his parentage. || *Without descent* ; literally, *without genealogy*. His name is not recorded in any genealogical register, and, con-

sequently, he appears without lineage or ancestry. — This mention of there being no genealogical record of him may be either explanatory of the terms *without father, without mother*, or may be a more general statement, namely, that he had no recorded ancestry. This circumstance was a very striking one in the view of orientals, who made great account of genealogical registers ; and its occurrence in regard to a distinguished individual would naturally arrest attention as a noteworthy peculiarity. || *Having neither beginning of days, nor*, etc. ; without a beginning, or a termination, of life, so far as the sacred record gives us information concerning him. We know him only as a living person ; we have never read of his birth, or of his death. — The writer's design evidently was to present resemblances in Melchizedek to Jesus, regarding one as the intended type of the other. In unfolding the type, that is, in presenting coincidences between the two, the silence of the Scriptures concerning Melchizedek suggested points of resemblance, as well as the positive information contained in the Scriptures. These coincidences, drawn out in detail, are certainly very remarkable, and must have been deeply impressive to the original readers of this epistle. || *But made like unto the Son of God*. In these various particulars, as to name, titles, lineage, beginning and ending of life, he was, by a special divine providence, made like the Son of God : a signal resemblance was occasioned between him and the Son of God, who is in reality a perfectly righteous and peaceful King, without beginning and without end, and who, in connection with his kingly authority, is invested with priesthood. — The coincidences between Melchizedek and Jesus, as here set forth, and the use which was made by the Spirit of God, in the 110th Psalm, of this venerable

made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

and mysterious man, as furnishing a parallel to the kingly priesthood of Jesus, have their most satisfactory explanation in the belief that Melchizedek was originally designed of God to be a type of Jesus, both in regard to what is made known concerning him and in regard to what God saw fit to keep in concealment. In his personal character and official position, which are matters of record, and in the silence of the Scripture as to any human parentage, as to a beginning and an ending of life to him, he was designed to foreshadow the Son of God as the kingly High-priest. — The intention of the writer in grouping together many circumstances of resemblance between Melchizedek and Jesus was, probably, to make impressive and suggestive the fact that Jesus had, agreeably to the 110th Psalm, become a High-priest after the likeness of Melchizedek, and to prepare the reader to see how vastly important was this predicted change in the priesthood. Such a group of coincidences in respect to persons and circumstances, mentioned in the sacred records, was well fitted to deepen conviction in the mind of a candid Jew concerning any religious subject. A similar tendency on the part of the sacred writers, when narrating certain events, to recall parallel or strikingly similar events, or even language which corresponds to such events, in order to impress the thought of a divine foresight and of a complete fulfilment of God's designs, is repeatedly shown in the Gospels. Events there narrated are frequently set in connection with some Old Testament declarations or events, rather on account of their striking resemblance and being corresponding parts of one great plan of divine Providence, than as furnishing a basis for direct argument. This is not surprising. In the instance before us, let any person, under the impression that a divine design is connected with the minutest events, — that God numbers the very hairs of our heads, — contemplate these coincidences between Melchizedek and Jesus, and he cannot but feel that the case is

a remarkable one; that this ancient king-priest may well be regarded as typical of Him who was to be a *priest upon his throne*, Zech. vi. 12, 13. — It is observable that neither here, nor elsewhere in this epistle, is any special notice taken of the union of the kingly office with the priestly in Melchizedek as a *main* point of distinction between the priesthood of Melchizedek and that of Aaron, while yet in this respect, also, and eminently, Christ, as a priest, resembled Melchizedek and differed from the Levitical high-priests. This union of regal power with priestly offices is, indeed, implied in the explanation of the name and title of Melchizedek, and in the repeated mention of Jesus being seated *at the right hand of God*, and it could not fail to be perceived by readers so familiar as were the Hebrews with the brief historical notice of Melchizedek in Gen. xiv. 18–20; but no distinct and prominent place is given to it in the epistle. Those to whom it was primarily addressed, and who, probably, were not unfamiliar with the thought, however incorrectly they may have apprehended it, that the Messiah was to have the power of royalty in conjunction with the sacredness of priesthood, doubtless needed that a certain other item, namely, that of perpetuity, should be brought distinctly and impressively before them. Besides, it was the special view of a high-priest *expiating for sin* and interceding with God, which was occupying the writer's mind, and which he desired to fasten in the minds of his readers. If this view were fully admitted and properly appreciated, they would then be in a condition better to understand the nature and design of Christ's kingly power. — || *Abideth a priest continually*; that is, *forever*. The word *continually* here corresponds to the word *forever* in vi. 20, and is designed to confirm the thought there expressed; thus presenting the closing point of resemblance between Melchizedek and Jesus. — This declaration concerning Melchizedek is not to be understood absolutely, as if affirming that, in the

⁴ Now consider how great *this man was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. ⁵ And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: ⁶ but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises: ⁷ and without all contradiction the less is blessed

strict meaning of the word, he abides a priest *continually, forever*; for Jesus only is the *ever-living Priest*. It is used concerning Melchizedek as compared with priests who, at their death, resign their offices to others; and as a typical person. The sacred record gives no account of his having died and having ceased to be a priest; as he appears in the sacred record, he abideth a priest continually. In this respect he typifies Jesus, who is really the everlasting High-priest. — The explanation of this clause leads to the explanation of the other mysterious terms in this connection. They are to be understood of Melchizedek as a typical person; so that what may in a certain sense be said of him is exactly and fully true of Jesus, the Son of God.

4-10. The writer now directs attention to the dignity of the priest Melchizedek as far transcending that of the Jewish priests, and thus, by implication, without a formal statement, asserts the corresponding dignity of Jesus as made a priest of the rank of Melchizedek. — *Now consider how great this man was.* The greatness, or dignity, of Melchizedek is shown by the fact that Abraham, the distinguished patriarch of the Hebrew nation, and so highly revered by them, treated him as entitled, in his priestly capacity, to special honor from himself, and gave him the tenth of his spoils as tithes; thus acknowledging Melchizedek's superiority and right to homage from him. || *The patriarch.* This title is more usually given to the twelve sons of Jacob, as being the progenitors of the twelve tribes. See Acts vii. 8, 9. Here it is used, with

eminence, of Abraham, as being the earliest of the distinguished men from whom the Hebrew people descended. See Gen. xii. 1-3; xiv. 13. Since Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, the inference is easy that he is to be held greater than Abraham's descendants, among whom were the Levitical priests.

5-7. From Abraham as compared with Melchizedek, the writer passes to the Levitical priests as compared with him, interweaving an additional proof of his superiority to Abraham. — *And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, etc.* It is, indeed, true that the descendants of Levi, who enter the priesthood, that is, the Levitical priests, have a command according to the Law, Num. xviii. 20-32, to take tithes of the people, although the people are *their brethren*, enjoying equally with themselves the distinction of being descendants of Abraham. They are, indeed, greatly honored in having such a command.

6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them, etc.* But Melchizedek, who was not lineally connected with the Levitical priests, has still higher honor in that he has received tithes from Abraham himself, the patriarch and head of the Hebrew people. He is therefore eminently superior to them. || *And blessed him that had the promises.* See Gen. xiv. 19. The fact that Melchizedek pronounced a blessing on Abraham, who was so honored of God as to be the recipient of most remarkable promises, is indicative also of his superiority to Abraham, on the principle stated in the following verse.

7. *And without all contradiction, etc.* Every one concedes that the person on

of the better. ⁸ And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. ⁹ And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. ¹⁰ For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

whom a blessing is pronounced is held to be inferior to him who pronounces it: the one who utters the blessing is superior, in point of age, or weight of character, or relative position, to him on whom it is pronounced. — The reasoning here turns aside for a moment from the priests to Abraham, as another circumstance relative to him was brought to mind. — The remark in this verse was eminently true in early times when the pronouncing of a blessing was universally felt to be of a very grave as well as affectionate character, and was so often a prophetic declaration, thus connecting the speaker intimately with God. See Gen. xxvii. 4, 27; xlviii. 15; Deut. xxxiii. 1.

8. An additional argument now follows for Melchizedek's superiority to the Levitical priests, namely, while we know that these priests are mortal men, we have no such positive knowledge of death having been undergone by Melchizedek. The Scriptures testify of him only as a living person. So far as the record goes, while death stands connected with these priests, only life is mentioned in connection with Melchizedek. — *And here*; that is, on the part of the Levitical priests, they who are known as dying men receive tithes; *but there*, on the part of Melchizedek, it is one who is testified of only as living that receives them. — The silence of Scripture is here employed as suggesting a point of contrast in Melchizedek's favor; and when he is viewed as a designed type of Christ, selected from all priests as the one who was to be specially comparable to the Son of God, the fact that we have no positive knowledge of his having died is significant.

9. His superiority to the Levitical priests appears also from the fact that Levi, the progenitor of these priests, acknowledged him as his superior, and consequently the superior of his de-

scendants. — *And, as I may so say*; or, *so to speak*; a form of expression implying that what we say needs some qualification, as not being strictly and literally the case, but requiring to be understood with such allowance as the ordinary apprehension of men will naturally suggest. || *Levi—paid tithes in Abraham*; more correctly, *through Abraham*.

10. *For he was yet in the loins*, etc. In the light of events which took place ages afterwards, and in view of the purpose of God, who giveth life to all who have it, and who calleth things that are not as though they were, Rom. iv. 17, Levi, who now, in the persons of his descendants, receiveth tithes, may be said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek. This is on the common principle that a man's acts often bind his children and remote posterity. The homage which Abraham rendered to Melchizedek may be regarded as shared in by his descendants, since he was the head and representative of the Hebrew nation. || *His father*. The word *father* is here equivalent to *progenitor*, or *ancestor*, for Abraham was great-grandfather to Levi, the succession being Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi. The Scripture, after the manner of the orientals, uses terms of kindredship with much latitude; thus, in Gen. xiv. 12, Lot is mentioned as Abraham's nephew, and in Gen. xiv. 14, he is called Abraham's brother.

Melchizedek has now been shown to be greater than any Levitical priest. But Jesus has become a priest after the rank, or according to the likeness, of Melchizedek; his priesthood, then, is greater than the Levitical. — The event of Jesus' being invested with this priesthood is of great importance in its relation to the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic law, as the writer now proceeds to show.

11-28. The ground for the intro-

¹¹ If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what fur-

duction of this different and superior priesthood is next brought to view in the form of an inference, and some consequences stated which result from its introduction. The ground for it is the inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood for relieving the spiritual necessities of men. In consequence of this inadequacy, the Levitical priesthood is terminated and the Mosaic dispensation is displaced by one different and better, vs. 11-19. The covenant on which the new dispensation rests is far better than that of the old, and the priesthood of Jesus on the basis of this new covenant is consequently better than the Levitical priesthood; his priesthood is also superior, since it is an unchanging one in his own person, vs. 20-25. It was befitting that we should have such a High-priest as Jesus, who has no need to offer sacrifices for himself, or to offer repeated sacrifices for the people, since his offering up of himself once was all-sufficient for their necessities, vs. 26-28.

11. *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, etc.* Perfection, here, has reference to the law of Moses, as a religious economy with which the Levitical priesthood stood essentially connected. The Mosaic law, as establishing and regulating the Levitical priesthood, had come to be regarded by the Jewish teachers as perfect and adequate to the wants of all men. They taught, consequently, that it was to endure, and that the nations in general were to be brought into favor with God by their becoming proselyted to it through the power of the Messiah. This assumed perfection of the Law was regarded as coming from the Levitical priesthood, since that priesthood was understood to be the medium of favor with God. The idea here may therefore be thus expressed: If the law of Moses really possessed perfection; that is, if the Mosaic economy were, by means of the Levitical priesthood, absolutely perfect, as to providing for men's acceptance with God, there could be no need of bring-

ing forward a priest of a sort different from the Levitical and of a higher rank. But a priest of this different sort was in the divine counsels provided for; Jesus has become that priest, and has entered on his priestly office. It clearly results, then, that the Levitical priesthood was, in the judgment of God, imperfect; it could not answer the ultimate purposes of a priesthood; it could not perfectly and finally procure the removal of a sinner's guilt, and provide acceptance for him in the sight of God. And as a change is thus made in the priesthood, a change in the Law, or religious economy, which established that priesthood and derived from it what efficacy it had, is also necessary. || *For under it the people received the law.* The idea here is not that *during* the Levitical priesthood the Law was fully communicated and established, but that *on* the Levitical priesthood, as a basis underlying the whole system, the Law was established; not in reference to time, for then the arrangements for the priestly office would have preceded the ordinary legislative enactments, but in reference to the *presupposed condition* that the people who should accept Moses as their law-giver should accept the priesthood which he should be empowered to establish. The people, in other words, received the Mosaic law with the Levitical priesthood as its essential ground. It was a *condition precedent*, that the priesthood should, so to speak, permeate the entire Law and be felt at all points. Between the priesthood and the Law there was to be so vital a connection that both were to exist together; neither of them was to be operative without the other; they were mutually dependent; what affected one of them affected also the other.—This parenthetical thought, *for under it the people received the law*, was introduced because in the sentiment which the writer was about to express he had in view the entire Law of Moses as well as the priesthood, and the thought thus suggested in passing

ther need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? ¹² For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. ¹³ For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. ¹⁴ For *it is evident*

would tend to prepare the readers to accept that sentiment. The Jewish teachers, still clinging to their traditional notions, had maintained that the Mosaic law, of which the Levitical priesthood was an essential part, was a perfect system; that it made adequate provision for men's religious necessities; that it was to be a permanent institution; that under the Messiah all nations were to be brought into subjection to it, and thus to the enjoyment of its advantages, even to the attainment of eternal life. In view of this favorite opinion, and to guard more effectually the Hebrew believers against it, he presents the Christian view of the case. If, — he virtually says, — if the Law were so perfect that an all-sufficient expiation could be effected by the Levitical priesthood, — for on the basis of this the people received the Law, — if, I say, perfection belonged to the Law through the Levitical priesthood, what need was there that a priest of a different order from the Levitical should arise? What need had yet arisen, or could ever arise, for a priest of a different and higher rank? This setting in office of a different and superior kind of priest must have its ground in the imperfection of the Law and the inefficacy of the Levitical priesthood for the ultimate purposes of an expiation. || *What further need was there, etc.* The word *further* does not well represent the thought of the original. *Yet, or as yet*, answers better. Thus, If the Levitical priesthood accomplished the high purpose of a priesthood, or were capable of so doing, what need, as yet, is there of a different priesthood? — a question which might be put at any time, and which is really equivalent to asking, What need could there *ever* be of a different priesthood?

|| *Another priest*; strictly, a *different* priest, one of a different kind.

12. *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* The Law, consequently, the Mosaic dispensation, must, in like manner, be changed, since it is so vitally connected with the priesthood that it stood or fell with that; and particularly the introduction of a priest different from those appointed by the Mosaic law is virtually a changing of that Law, since its prescriptions relative to the priesthood are thereby disregarded by an arrangement made in the counsels of God.

13. *For he of whom these things are spoken, etc.* The placing of Jesus in the priesthood does, in reality, bring about this change of the Law; for Jesus, concerning whom *these things*, that is, the declaration made in Ps. ex. 4, are spoken, belonged to a different tribe from that to which, agreeably to the instructions in the Mosaic law, Aaron and the priests belonged. Jesus belonged to a tribe from which, in obedience to that Law, no one gave attendance, or ministered, at the altar; that is, became a priest.

14. *For it is evident, etc.*; for it is fully manifest to all that our Lord was of the tribe of Judah. — The descent of Jesus from the tribe of Judah was a matter of record in the genealogical tables. See Luke iii. 33, where the name of Judah, the patriarch of the tribe of Judah, occurs among the ancestors of Jesus; also, Matt. i. 3. — Moses said nothing, in reference to the tribe of Judah, concerning priests, gave no directions as to selecting priests from that tribe, but limited the selection to the tribe of Levi. By the fact, then, of God's making Jesus, who descended from Judah, a High-priest, the Mosaic law is disregarded as being

that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,¹⁶ who is made, not after the

no longer in force. The Law, as well as the priesthood, was imperfect for the ultimate purposes of a religious dispensation, and, when the time came for Jesus to be made High-priest, its functions ceased; a new and better order of things was introduced. — The law of Moses prescribed that the tribe of Levi should be set apart as the priestly tribe; Aaron and his descendants belonging to this tribe were to be priests, and the other families of the tribe were to furnish all the other attendants requisite for the care of the tabernacle and for the ritual service. It would have been a presumptuous violation of the Law for a person of a different tribe to perform priestly services, or other services pertaining to the religious ritual. As being thus set apart to religious service, the tribe of Levi had no share in the distribution of the country among the tribes, but was supported by the tithes and voluntary offerings of the people. See Ex. xxviii. 1; Num. i. 47-51; iii. 2-10; viii. 9-14; xvi. 40; xviii. 1-7.

15-17. An additional evidence of a change in the priesthood, a change which is aside from the Law and which involves a change of the Law, is next given, namely, the prophetic declaration, "Thou art a priest *forever*." He who was predicted as a priest, to hold his office *forever*, must become a priest by a different provision from that of the Mosaic law; that law could not make provision for such a priest; it was weak in regard to spiritual and everlasting concerns, and did not, from its ceremonial and temporary nature, require such a priest. The system, on the contrary, according to which Jesus becomes the priest, is one which provides *power* for securing eternal life to those who embrace it. The very nature of this system makes it necessary that he should be a priest of a different kind from those provided by the Mosaic law. — The question, Whether

a priest was to arise, like to Melchizedek and not like to Aaron, one who should become a priest not according to the rule of a powerless system of commands, but according to the power which secures an endless life, is answered to complete satisfaction by the testimony of the prophetic declaration, "Thou art a priest *forever*, after the order of Melchizedek." As Jesus, then, has become an *everlasting* priest, his priesthood is based on a system which is endued with power for securing eternal life to his followers, and not on a system which was inherently weak and inefficacious as to eternal life, namely, the Mosaic law. The Mosaic law, consequently, is, in this matter, treated as of no validity. — Our common translation of these verses is quite defective. The following more correctly represents the original: — *And it is yet more abundantly evident that according to the likeness of Melchizedek a different priest arises, who is made a priest not after a law of a carnal commandment, but after a power of an endless life; for it is testified, Thou art a priest FOREVER, after the order of Melchizedek.* These verses contain an argument, additional to the historical proof in the 14th verse, that a priest was to arise according to a different rule from that which was prescribed by the Mosaic law; and it consequently shows that, in the appointment of this priest, the Mosaic law was treated as null and void, and regard was had to a Law, or dispensation, which makes effectual provision for everlasting life.

15. *After the similitude of Melchizedek;* that is, like unto Melchizedek. This expression is essentially the same as the expression, *after the order of Melchizedek*, as the original Hebrew of Ps. cx. 4, might be translated, *according to the manner of Melchizedek.*

16. *Who is made;* that is, who is made or become a priest. *¶ Not after the law, etc.;* more properly, *according*

law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. ¹⁷ For he testifieth, *Thou art a priest forever* after the order of Melchizedek. ¹⁸ For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weak-

to a law, referring either to the entire Mosaic economy or to that portion of the Mosaic institutes which relates to the Levitical priesthood. || *A carnal commandment.* The word *commandment* is here, probably, used in a general sense, embracing all the commands which prescribed the rites to be performed by the priests, and the things which were to be observed, and those which were to be avoided, by the people. These commands pertained so much to ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, to sacrifices and offerings, to retaining a place in the congregation, that is, in the Jewish commonwealth, or to regaining it when forfeited, and to various temporal matters, that they are here designated as *carnal*, or pertaining to this world, to externals, and being consequently inefficacious as to securing eternal life. || *But after the power of an endless life;* or, according to a power of endless life. Reference is had to what we call *the system of the gospel* in distinction from the *Mosaic system*. While the latter was so much occupied with ceremonies and the external relations of men, the former, the gospel, is directly and perpetually occupied with men's spiritual concerns, or their becoming possessors of spiritual and endless life on earth and in heaven; the gospel, consequently, has a power, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, which accompany it, on the conscience towards God, on the radical purposes and affections of men, renewing the soul and making it acceptable to God. This the Law had not power to do; it was *carnal*, weak; but the gospel is made *the power of God unto salvation*, Rom. i. 16; viii. 3, 4. This other and different priest, then, is set in office, not according to a Law which enjoined commands pertaining to external and temporal things, to the flesh rather than to the spirit, and which consequently was weak as to spiritual con-

cerns; but he is set in office according to a power, or a powerful, efficacious system, which is designed and adapted to secure endless life.

17. *For he testifieth;* that is, God testifieth, in Ps. cx. 4. The most approved copies of the original have here, *it is testified*. The announcement of Jehovah, here referred to, is taken as a prophetic testimony; and as it bears witness that Jesus, of whom it was spoken, was to become a priest forever, an *everlasting* priest, it is God's testimony to a change in the priesthood, whereby, in place of the Levitical, which dealt with the flesh, a priesthood is substituted which deals with the spirit, and which establishes an ever-living priest to administer a system for securing spiritual and eternal life.

18, 19. Such a priest, one able to secure spiritual and eternal life, is now set in office; *for* the Mosaic law is set aside as being powerless to secure eternal salvation, and a better hope than the Law could give is introduced. — *For there is verily a disannulling, etc.* For the Mosaic law is set aside on account of its weakness as to securing spiritual and eternal good for men, and on account of its consequent unprofitableness in this respect. — The *change* spoken of in the 12th verse is here expressed by a stronger term, *a setting aside*. The *abrogation* of the Mosaic law, as a religious system, is meant; an issue which was gently and gradually presented to the readers of the epistle. || *The commandment going before;* that is, the system of commands which was formerly in force, namely, the Mosaic law, the former dispensation. || *For the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.* The Mosaic law, viewed as a system of external prescriptions and rites designed to regulate the standing of individuals in the Jewish community, to prevent ceremonial uncleanness, to remove it when

ness and unprofitableness thereof. ¹⁹ For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

contracted, and to separate visibly the Jewish people from Gentiles, was from its very nature, since it had so much to do with externals, destitute of power and of profit as to man's highest spiritual welfare; such external prescriptions could not purify the soul and give peace to a conscience burdened with a sense of sin and of condemnation. They were rather resemblances and preparatives of what was designed to be introduced when the full time, Gal. iv. 4, 5, should have come for establishing a spiritual economy which, passing beyond these external matters, should provide for peace with God in the conscience, and for the sure hope of eternal life. — The Law, viewed also as a system of divine commands enjoining obedience in heart and life to the will of God, and requiring genuine and universal piety, supreme love to God, holy affection and holy conduct, as it unquestionably did, was also weak and unprofitable, not through its own nature, but through the strong sinful inclination of men's hearts. As the epistle to the Romans, viii. 3, expresses the thought, "the law was weak *through the flesh*." In itself, holy and good as it was, it could not secure the obedience of men; their hearts were arrayed against it, and it was completely manifest that a different system from one of commands and prohibitions, of promises on condition of perfect obedience to the law and of threatenings in case of any disobedience, was requisite for bringing men to holiness and salvation. A disannulling, that is, a setting aside of the former system of commands, therefore, has taken place.

19. *For the law made nothing perfect.* A reason is now given for this setting aside of the Mosaic law, namely, the Law carried nothing to completion; it was intended to be, not a complete and final system, but preparatory and preliminary to another and a perfect system. It did not carry its teachings,

its expiations, its hopes, to perfection; but left all imperfect, in expectation of a better system, which should furnish ample *teachings* on men's spiritual concerns and prospects, an effectual *expiation* for sin, so that sin might be pardoned and removed, and peace with God be obtained, also a better *hope* which should not be liable to disappointment, but should be sure, steadfast, and be actually consummated in the possession of heaven. — This clause ought to be set in a parenthesis, as giving a passing and comprehensive reason for the statement in the 18th verse. — || *But the bringing in of a better hope did.* The word *did* was supplied by our translators, but it fails to represent the meaning of this clause and its relation to the preceding verse. This clause is really, according to the original, a contrast to the statement, *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before*, and not the contrast to the words, *The law made nothing perfect*. Its intent is better shown by the following version: *There is, on the one side, a disannulling, rather, a setting aside, of the foregoing commandment (for the law made nothing perfect), and on the other a bringing in, an introduction, of a better hope*, that is, a better ground of hope, by which, no doubt, is meant the *new covenant*, as representing the gospel, on which the priesthood of Jesus is based. — The view here given of the Mosaic law and the gospel agrees with that in 2 Cor. iii. 6–11, where the Mosaic economy is represented as having passed away and given place to the gospel, which is the *abiding* system, as the completion of God's arrangements for enlightening and saving men. Compare, also, Gal. iii. 21–26. — || *By the which we draw nigh unto God*; by means of which hope, founded on the high-priesthood of Jesus, who has offered up for us an effectual sacrifice, and who has entered into heaven on our behalf, vi. 19, 20, we draw nigh to God, presenting our petitions with unflinching confi-

²⁰ And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*: ²¹ (for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek:) ²² by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

²³ And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: ²⁴ but this *man*,

dence. — In all our acts of worship, personal and social, private and public, we are considered as appearing before God, presenting to him praise and prayer, cherishing the spirit of obedient learners of his will, and doing homage to him as having the right to our service and affection. The hope of acceptance as to our persons and our service, springing from the priestly offering and intercession of Jesus, brings us into affectionate harmony with God and cherishes the spirit of filial trust and delight, while yet it in no wise diminishes the reverence and awe which his greatness and holiness naturally inspire.

20-25. The superiority of the priesthood of Jesus is further shown from the superiority of the covenant of which he is the surety, as compared with the covenant of the Mosaic law, and from the unchangeableness of his priesthood. — *And inasmuch as*, etc. The covenant of which Jesus has become the surety is as much better than the ancient covenant as the manner in which he was announced a priest was more solemn than the manner in which the Levitical priests were appointed. *He* was made a priest with the solemnity and assurance of an oath on the part of Jehovah; but no oath accompanied *their* entrance into office.

21. *The Lord sware, and will not repent*, Ps. ex. 4. *Will not repent*; that is, will not turn from his sworn promise as if he regretted it, but will surely adhere to it.

22. *Surety*; a sponsor, one who becomes responsible for the fulfilling of an engagement. Compare Gen. xliii. 9; xliv. 32. In order to impress the mind with the indubitable certainty that the promise of eternal life in the

covenant, which is substituted for that of the Mosaic law, will not fail, the Son of God is represented as becoming security for its fulfilment. This representation is, of course, in accommodation to human modes of establishing confidence in the fulfilment of promises or contracts; and no stronger assurance could be given that the promise or engagement of God, to bestow eternal life, would be fulfilled, than by his Son's becoming the surety. In the sufferings, death, and resurrection of his Son, and in making him the High-priest of the covenant in which eternal life is promised to the followers of Jesus, God has given the very highest assurance that that covenant shall be kept inviolable. Compare Rom. viii. 32, 34. || *A better testament*; more properly, *covenant*, namely, that which has taken the place of the covenant on which the Mosaic law, or dispensation, rested; it is *better*, inasmuch as it provides for the renewal of the heart, so as to make obedience to God its choice, and for a free and entire forgiveness of sins, equivalent to a blotting of them out of remembrance, so that those who have become, by virtue of this covenant, the forgiven and accepted objects of divine favor, will be treated as if they had never sinned. Compare viii. 10-12.

23-25. The superiority of Jesus, as High-priest, appears, also, in the fact that Jesus, unlike the Jewish high-priests, is an ever-living High-priest; his interest in those who confide in his mediation never ceases, never wanes; his priesthood is never transferred to other hands, but he personally carries on to completeness the salvation of every one who comes to God through him. — *And they truly were many*

because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For such a high-priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than

priests. The priests under the Mosaic law, or the former covenant, were many, since they were mortal, and succession from one to another was, of necessity, constantly taking place.

24. *But this man*, etc.; but on the contrary, Jesus, on account of his abiding forever in life, since in his heavenly exaltation he is beyond liability to death, has a priesthood which does not pass from one incumbent to another, but is continued in him personally.

25. *He is able to save to the uttermost*; that is, to completeness, or completely, perfectly. He is able to save entirely, leaving nothing more to be done for those in whose behalf he acts, but carrying forward the work of their salvation to its utmost extent. The priestly work of Jesus for them is efficacious not merely in part, but in whole; it reaches not merely to a certain point in the exigencies of the case, but covers the whole ground of their necessities, however sinful and ill-deserving they may have been. By the completeness of the salvation which he bestows, he is also the author, or "captain, of their salvation," able to conduct the sons of God *wholly through* to glory, ii. 10. "He perfects what his love begins." — Every constant follower of Jesus may, then, indulge the encouraging thought, My interests are in the hands of the great High-priest who knows me and all my circumstances throughout, who cares for me and will care for me to the end, John xiii. 1; to no other is my cause to be transferred, and never will there be a waning of his interest towards me. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him," 2 Tim. i. 12. ¶ *Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; since he is always living so as to intercede in their behalf. The Jewish high-priests

were intercessors for the people and for individuals with God; so Jesus is the intercessor for his followers, and procures for them divine grace adequate to their necessities. As in consequence of their liability to sin they always need the kind offices of an effectual intercessor, so Jesus *lives always* to intercede in their behalf. — Precisely *how* Jesus intercedes in behalf of his followers it is wholly useless to inquire. The *fact* of his so doing is here presented, and, by implication, the *efficacy* of his intercessions. Of course, the manner of thus securing divine favor for us is in accordance with his spiritual nature; earthly and bodily forms and modes are incompatible with that spiritual nature, and we need not embarrass the subject with any material, or earthly, representatives. As in our Lord's kingly relation to his followers, his power makes all things work together for their good in ways beyond our comprehension, so in his priestly relation, since he knows all their liabilities, their actual sins, and their need of special divine aid to meet emergencies, he *secures* for them, through his interest in their behalf and the perfect compliance of the Father with his wishes for them, the abiding mercy of God and his continued sanctifying and strengthening grace. Compare Rom. viii. 31-34; John x. 27-30.

26-28. Another, and the final point of superiority on the part of Jesus; namely, the Jewish high-priests have need to offer sacrifices time after time, first for themselves and then for the people; but the sacrifice which Jesus offered for the people, not needing any for himself, he offered *once for all*.

26. *For such a high-priest became us.* For it was suitable also to our case, eminently suitable for us, that we should have such a high-priest as Jesus is; perfectly *holy, harmless*, do-

the heavens; ²⁷ who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

ing no evil to any one, *undefiled*, wholly unpolluted, *separate*, rather, *separated, from sinners*, by his departure from among sinful men, thus freed from all contact with unholy beings and from the possibility of any diminution of the venerableness which his person and his office inspire; and *made higher than the heavens*, who has passed through the heavens, iv. 14, to the right hand of God on high, i. 3; Mark xvi. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

27. *Who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifices*, etc. As he is perfectly sinless, he has no need to offer sacrifices on his own account; and as he offered up *himself* a sacrifice for the sins of the people, this one sacrifice was all-sufficient for all the people of all time.—This is the first passage in the epistle which speaks of Christ as having *offered up himself*; the mention of it occurs repeatedly in subsequent passages.—The death of Christ was not compulsory, but voluntary. He had said, "I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." John x. 17, 18. When he was fastened to the cross, he still retained power over his life, and did not expire by natural consequence of crucifixion; it is doubtful whether death would have occurred by natural consequence so soon as it did in his case. Hence, "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead." See Mark xv. 44. Compare Luke xxiii. 46; John xix. 33. His sufferings may indeed be called *mortal sufferings*, because death would have resulted from them had he seen fit to allow the result to take place in an entirely natural way. But when, on the cross, he saw that all things appointed for him to do and to suffer were accomplished, he exclaimed, "It is finished," and of his own accord breathed out his soul,

John xix. 30, thus offering up himself as a sacrificial victim. Compare Rom. iii. 25; Gal. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 18-20; ii. 21-24. || *Once*; once forever.—The Mosaic law required a daily morning and evening sacrifice, Ex. xxix. 38-42. As the high-priest's offering of sacrifices took place on the day of the *annual atonement*, Lev. 16th chapter, the word *daily* is here understood by some writers in the broad sense of *frequently*. The Jewish historian, Josephus, however, says, in his Jewish War, v. 5, 7, that the high-priests frequently participated in the daily offerings. The high-priest was also the head of the entire company of priests, and might, therefore, naturally be thought of as concerned virtually, if not actually, in all the services of priests, the priestly and sacrificial system centring in him.

28. *For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity*, etc. A reason for the vast difference here presented between the Jewish high-priests and Jesus in their respective sacrifices, lies in the vast personal contrast between them and him. The Law makes high-priests men who *have infirmity*; that is, who are sinful, v. 2, and who therefore have need to offer sacrifices for themselves, verse 27; but *the word of the oath*, the declaration of God accompanied with an oath, verse 21, that is, the divine announcement concerning a priest after the manner of Melchizedek, Ps. cx. 4, the oath confirmatory of which was sworn subsequently to the establishment of the Law, since it was announced through David, and which, consequently, when it took effect, set the Law aside, appoints as High-priest *HIS SON*, who was without sin, and who is made perfect in glory forever.—Christ did, indeed, have infirmity, but in a sense different from that which is here affirmed of the Levitical priests; for while they had

PART FOURTH.

CHAPTERS VIII., IX., X. 1-18.

SUPERIORITY OF THE HIGH-PRIESTLY MINISTRATION OF CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLY HOLY OF HOLIES.

§ His ministration as much more excellent than that in the earthly sanctuary, as the new covenant is more excellent than the old, viii. 1-7. Promises of the new covenant, viii. 8-13. § The earthly tabernacle and its priestly service, the heavenly and its service, in contrast, ix. 1-14. The new covenant has Christ for its mediator by reason of the efficacy of his death, which was necessary to its validity, ix. 15-23. Christ entered into heaven in our behalf with his own blood, which he offered once forever, ix. 24-28. § The Law cannot procure a perfect expiation, but rather renews the consciousness of guilt, x. 1-4. Christ, in consequence, came to make an efficacious offering, x. 5-10. § The Levitical priests are offering, day after day, the same unavailing sacrifices; but Christ, after offering one sacrifice, sat down at the right hand of God, having made a perfect and ever-abiding expiation, x. 11-14, agreeably to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, x. 15-18.

moral infirmity, that is, sin, he was sinless and had only the *natural* infirmity of men, by which he became liable to death. His death, too, was different from theirs, since it was not of a penal nature; but was required by the divine appointment, that through death he should become the author of salvation and be elevated to his perfect glory. || *Consecrated*. The original word means *perfected, made perfect*, and relates to the state of perfect glory to which Jesus is exalted in heaven. Compare v. 9. Having passed through the scenes of humiliation and suffering on earth, by which he became perfectly qualified for his priesthood, he is crowned with glory and honor forever, ii. 9, and set in that state of perfect dignity to which his perfection of holiness and of official qualification entitles him. He is "head over all things to the church." Eph. i. 22.

PART IV.

CHAPTERS VIII., IX., X. 1-18.

SUPERIORITY OF THE HIGH-PRIESTLY MINISTRATION OF CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLY HOLY OF HOLIES.

To this Part the writer invites special attention by denominating it the *chief, or main*, thing in his discourse. — He had shown the superiority of Christ to the angels and to Moses; he had also shown not only that Christ, as High-priest, is far superior to the Levitical high-priests, but

even that the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic law are set aside by the entrance of Christ on his priestly office. He wished, however, to carry forward the view to a more convincing and affecting point by presenting Christ officiating, as the High-priest, in the heavenly sanctuary, clothed at the same time with the authority and majesty of the SON OF GOD, seated at the right hand of the Father. He would thus group together and concentrate various affecting particulars concerning Christ as to the offering which he presented, the redemption which he has secured, and the ever-availing efficacy of his one sacrifice which supercedes the necessity of any other and puts an end to the sacrificial system. Such contrasts between Christ and the Levitical high-priests could hardly fail to rivet conviction and secure the adherence of the Hebrew brethren to Jesus, as their Redeemer and Lord.

The following is a summary of this Part: — Christ is the regal High-priest in the heavenly sanctuary, viii. 1-5. His priestly service is far more excellent than that of the Levitical priests, in the same proportion as the covenant in reference to which he acts is more excellent than the old covenant, ver. 6. The old covenant was open to exception, and was therefore superseded by the new, ver. 7. The promises of the new covenant are rehearsed, and the abrogation of the old affirmed, vs. 8-13.

Under the first covenant, priestly service was performed in an earthly sanctuary, and was occupied with offerings which could impart only an *external* purification, ix. 1-10. But Christ's priestly service is performed in the heavenly sanctuary, into which he entered once for all with his own blood, which procures cleansing to the conscience in reference to God, vs. 11-14. — Since it is only the new covenant that provides for eternal redemption from sin and for cleansing of the conscience, he is the mediator of this covenant, in order that by death, undergone for redemption from transgressions during the first covenant also, those who have been called of God might receive the promised inheritance; for a covenant conveying an *inheritance*, that is, a testament, requires death for its validity, vs. 15-17. Even the first covenant was not ratified without blood, as indicative of death, vs. 18-22. The sacrificial death of ani-

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¹ Now of the things which we have spoken *this is the sum*: we have such a High-priest, who is set on the right

mala was necessary in order that the tabernacle, an earthly resemblance of heaven, might be accessible; but for access into heaven a more excellent sacrifice was necessary: for Christ entered into heaven itself in our behalf with his own blood; an offering which need not be repeated, since his one sacrifice is all sufficient, vs. 23-28.

The sacrifice which Christ offered was necessary; for the Mosaic law could not convey heavenly blessings, but only shadowed them forth. Its repeated sacrifices could not effect a complete expiation, but were continually renewing the remembrance of sins; for the blood of mere animals cannot remove sins, x. 1-4. Consequently, Christ, in fulfilment of the will of God, offered up himself once forever to deliver us from sin, vs. 5-10.

The Levitical priests never reach a higher position than that of offering, day after day, the same sacrifices which cannot take away sins; but Christ, having once offered up himself, sat down on the right hand of God, there awaiting the subjection of all his enemies; for by his one offering he has secured for his followers perfect and eternal deliverance from sin, according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit that God will not remember their sins. There is, consequently, no more any offering for sin, vs. 11-18.—Christ's ministration is superior, then, to that of the Jewish high-priests: 1, he ministers in the heavenly sanctuary; 2, he offers, not the blood of animals, but his own priceless blood; 3, he secures cleansing for the conscience and redemption from sin; 4, his *one* offering is forever availing and acceptable.

The substance of this Fourth Part may also be stated in the following compendious form of contrasts between the services of the Levitical priests and the priestly service of Christ:

1. As to their respective *covenants*: the old was exceptionable and temporary; the new is perfect and permanent, viii. 7-13.
2. As to *place*: the Levitical priests served in an earthly sanctuary; Christ serves in the heavenly, ix. 1-7, 11.
3. As to the *offerings*: the Levitical priests offered up mere animals; Christ offered up himself, ix. 7, 12.
4. As to *efficacy*: the Levitical priests could procure only external purification; Christ procures purification of the conscience towards God, ix. 9, 10, 12-14; x. 1-10.
5. As to *repetition*: the Levitical priests offered year by year and daily; Christ offered once forever, ix. 6, 7, 12, 25-28; x. 1-10, 18.
6. As to *position* of the Levitical priests and of Christ respectively: the Levitical priests were perpetually occupied in the routine of offering sacrifices which were ineffectual for taking away sin; no higher post than this awaited them; Christ, having made his offering, was exalted to the right hand of God, to participate in the dominion of the universe, having regal power as well as priestly efficacy, viii. 1; x. 11-14.

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Christ, the High-priest, exalted to the right hand of the throne of God, officiates in the heavenly sanctuary, 1,

2. As being High-priest, he must of

course present an offering for the expiation of sins, 3. It is in *heaven*, not on earth, that he must officiate, because the earthly sanctuary is already provided with priests according to the Law, and their service on earth is but a foreshadowing of his service in heaven, 4, 5. His priestly service is a more excellent one than theirs, inasmuch as the covenant by which he acts is superior to the first covenant and is established on promises of richer blessings, 6. This new covenant was introduced, because the first was imperfect and liable to exception, since it did not provide for the inward holiness and final acceptance with God of those who entered into it. By the new covenant, God engages to give to his people an obedient heart, to be their God, and to acknowledge them as his people, to forgive their sins fully and finally, 8-12. In calling this a *new* covenant, he has evidently regarded the former as *antiquated*; and as being such, it is abrogated, 13.

1. *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum.* This first clause is to be taken as a title of the remaining part of the discussion respecting Christ. The original word here translated *sum*, more properly signifies the *chief*, or *principal matter*. The argumentative view of Christ in this epistle has its culmination here; this part is the principal matter in the things here spoken of. For in this are unfolded, with particularity, the abrogation of the Mosaic covenant and the completing of God's arrangements for men's spiritual welfare by the introduction of the Christian dispensation, which provides fully, for believers in Jesus, pardon and redemption from sin. || *We have such a High-priest*; such as is described in vii. 26, 27, possessed not only of every personal and official requisite, but also exalted to perfect glory in heaven. || *Who is set on the right hand of the throne*, etc.; more correctly, *who sat down*. — *The Majesty in the heavens* is an appellative

hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens : ² a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which

for God in his sovereignty on high; and the representation here is, that Christ, the Son of God, who is our High-priest, took his position on the throne of God as partaking in the government of the universe. — For the regal position of Christ, see 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25; Eph. i. 20–23; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rev. v. 12, 13; vii. 9, 10. The regal authority of Christ is conjoined with his priestly mediation in securing all needed blessings for his followers.

2. *A minister of the sanctuary; a ministering priest of the Holy of holies, or the most holy apartment in the heavenly tabernacle.* — The innermost apartment of the Jewish tabernacle was distinguished from the other portions of the structure by the appellation *holy of holies*; that is, the *most holy*, Ex. xxvi. 33. Into this apartment only the high-priest was allowed to enter, and he but one day in the year, namely, the day of the annual atonement for the sins of the entire people, Ex. xxx. 10; Lev. xvi. 2, 29–34. In this *most holy* place God made, on the day of the annual atonement, a special and visible manifestation of himself over the mercy-seat, to the officiating high-priest, as the God of pardoning mercy, Lev. xvi. 2. See, also, Ex. xxv. 22, where God promises to meet Moses in that apartment in order to give him commandments for the children of Israel. Though the Lord made this special manifestation of himself in the *most holy* apartment, the tabernacle, *as a whole*, was erected according to divine command as a dwelling for Him, Ex. xxv. 8; xxx. 6. As so minute directions were given from God in regard to the structure, Ex. 25th chapter, and a pattern, or model, was presented to the mind of Moses while he was on the mount receiving instructions from God, Ex. xxv. 9, 40, also, Acts vii. 44, the earthly tabernacle with its several apartments was regarded as a copy of a structure in heaven; and thus, when Christ is conceived of as the High-priest in heaven, he performs his

priestly offices in the heavenly Holy of holies. || *And of the true tabernacle; the veritable heavenly tabernacle of which that erected under Moses was but a shadow, or copy.* || *Which the Lord pitched, and not man; which was framed and set up, not by human hands, but by the Lord himself.* — In harmony with the generally received view among the Jews, the writer conceives of a tabernacle in heaven, shown to Moses, probably in vision, in correspondence to which that on earth was made; so that the *true tabernacle* was the original one in heaven, which served as the model for the one on earth. The representation is, of course, figurative; the *true tabernacle* is heaven itself, and the *sanctuary*, that is, the *most holy* apartment, in which Christ officiates as High-priest, is heaven itself, ix. 24, where Christ procures for his people all needed spiritual aid. Yet, to carry out the idea of his being a ministering High-priest, the conception of the heavenly tabernacle and *most holy* place, would be particularly advantageous to the Jewish mind. — It would seem that, when Moses was instructed in the mount, Ex. xxiv. 12, 13, 15, 16, to build the tabernacle, a pattern, or model, of a tabernacle in heaven, was shown him, perhaps in a vision. This model would appear to have been regarded by the Jews as a structure actually existing in heaven; so that the structure erected by order of Moses was a copy, or shadow, of the one in heaven. In conformity to this idea, when Christ is represented as a High-priest in heaven, it is in the *most holy* apartment of the heavenly structure, conceived of as still standing, that he is performing priestly service. A tabernacle in heaven is, of course, to be understood figuratively; and when we ask, what is the real meaning of the figure, we learn, from ix. 24, that heaven itself is intended by it. When we consider that under the Mosaic dispensation the blood for the annual atonement was offered up by the high-

the Lord pitched, and not man. ³ For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. ⁴ For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: ⁵ who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

priest in the *most holy* apartment of the tabernacle, and the transgressions of the people were in consequence remitted, the corresponding representation is a natural one, that Christ presents the true blood of atonement in the place where God specially shows himself merciful. As the tabernacle on earth was his abode, and he there dispensed mercy, so in heaven God is regarded as having his special abode, from which he dispenses pardoning mercy and needful grace in consideration of the offering presented by the great High-priest.—The ideas thus originally associated with the Mosaic tabernacle were afterwards transferred to the temple erected by Solomon; but throughout this epistle it is the Mosaic structure that was had in view. For a similar representation adapted to the temple service, namely, that of a temple in heaven, see Rev. iii. 12; xi. 1, 2, 19; xiv. 15, 17; xv. 5, 8. Then, as dispelling the idea of a material structure in heaven, it is said, in xxi. 22, “And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”—In Rev. vii. 15, xvi. 17, it is noticeable that the two objects, a *throne* and a *temple*, are simultaneously contemplated; in striking harmony with the union in Christ of the *regal* and the *priestly* offices.

3. *For every high-priest, etc.* See on v. 1. Christ is mentioned in the 2d verse as a *ministering* priest, on the ground that every high-priest is, from the nature and design of his office, to offer up gifts and sacrifices; and hence, this High-priest, Jesus, must have something which he may offer. This offering is said, in ix. 12, 14, to

be *his own blood* for expiating the sins of his people.

4. *For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, etc.* His priestly service is performed in *heaven*, or in the heavenly sanctuary; for the earthly sanctuary, that is, the Jewish holy place, is already furnished with priests, who make offerings to God agreeably to the Law. If he were still on earth, then, there would be no occasion for him to be a priest.

5. *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; literally, who serve the example, etc.* The term *heavenly things* is here equivalent to the *sanctuary*, or *holy of holies*, in *heaven*; and the phrase, *the example and shadow* of this heavenly holy of holies, signifies the *most holy* apartment of the earthly tabernacle, in which the Jewish high-priests rendered service. These priests officiated in, or served, the tabernacle, xiii. 10, which was an *example*, that is, a *pattern*, a likeness, and *shadow* of the heavenly tabernacle, the true tabernacle in heaven. The Jewish tabernacle, particularly the innermost apartment, in which God manifested his special presence, was a shadowy, obscure resemblance of the heavenly sanctuary, having been framed according to the model of the heavenly structure shown to Moses.—For this resemblance of the one to the other, see ix. 23. || *As Moses was admonished, etc.* The resemblance between the Jewish tabernacle and the heavenly is here sustained and illustrated by the fact that Moses was particularly cautioned to observe the directions given him, and the model shown him on the mount, Ex. xxv. 9, 40; xxvi. 30;

⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. ⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. ⁸ For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: ⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them

Acts vii. 44; thus making the earthly tabernacle a copy of the heavenly. As the tabernacle when completed corresponded to that pattern, so those who served the tabernacle, that is, officiated in it as priests, served the copy, or shadow, of the heavenly sanctuary.

6. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry*, etc. The priestly ministration on which Christ has entered in heaven is superior to that of the Levitical priests in the same proportion as the covenant of which he is the mediator, or by virtue of which he interposes in behalf of his followers, is superior to the covenant in respect to which the Levitical priests officiated. The superiority of this covenant appears particularly in the blessings which it makes sure: the former covenant engaged, indeed, to bestow the favor of God, and all needed benefits, on condition of obedience to all the commands of God; but the people who engaged to render this obedience failed, through their sinfulness, of compliance, and, therefore, of the benefits: in the new covenant God promises to his people a heart which should be inclined to obedience; also the forgiveness of their sins which he will no more remember.

7. *For if that first covenant had been faultless*, etc. This new covenant is pronounced *better* than the old. The implication, then, is that the old was defective, and that exception could be taken against it; since, if it had been unexceptionable, no place would have been sought for a second covenant. — This defectiveness, or liability to be

excepted against as being *faulty*, consists not in the covenant itself, but in the spirit of those with whom it was made: it was a righteous covenant, requiring righteous obedience which they promised, but failed, to render. The second covenant makes particular account of the sinfulness of men, which had been brought into so full relief by the operation of the first: it consequently provides for the renovation of their hearts, so that God may be really their God, and they, in their possession of a holy temper, may be really his people; it also provides for the pardon of their sins, without which they could not stand in the relation of a people accepted of God.

8. *For finding fault with them, he saith*, etc. To show that the first covenant, the one made with the people under Moses, and on which the Mosaic law was founded, was *faulty*, or *exceptionable*, the censure is now adduced which God passed on the Jewish people for not adhering to the covenant which they had engaged to observe. The new covenant, also, is adduced which God promised to make with his genuine people. — *With them*; that is, with the ancient Israelites, the national people of God, who had covenanted to obey his laws, but had violated their engagement. — The declaration of God, here quoted in vs. 8-12, is found in Jer. xxxi. 31-34. || *The days come*. A future time is here indicated, namely, the days of the Messiah, when the Christian dispensation should be introduced, and the covenant of mercy and salvation should be made, not

not, saith the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: ¹¹ and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. ¹² For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

with the house of Israel as a national people, but with the spiritual house of Israel, the believing people of God of whatever nation.

9. *With their fathers*; the forefathers of the Israelites, whom God delivered from Egypt. *|| They continued not in my covenant*; they did not abide in it, did not stand by it. See Ex. xxxii. 7-10. The entire history of the nation furnishes proof of this declaration. *|| And I regarded them not*; I withdrew from them my favorable regards. By such language God expressed his displeasure with the Israelites, on account of their disregarding their obligations and engagements.

10. *The house of Israel*; the spiritual Israel, the true people of God. Compare Rom. ix. 6. *|| I will put my laws into their mind*, etc.; my laws shall not be an external set of prescriptions, but shall be properly apprehended and be responded to in their mind and heart, so that they shall obey from choice, from the very impulse of their renewed dispositions; their obedience shall be the outward working of an internal spirit at harmony with the divine laws. *|| And I will be to them a God*, etc.; I will be in truth their God, and they shall be truly my people. This mutual relation shall not be external and national, but a spiritual one, having its ground in the grace of God, and in the love, faith, and hope of the renewed souls of his people.

11. *And they shall not teach every man his neighbor*, etc. They shall not need to be taught one of another, for they shall be all taught of God; they shall have personal knowledge of God's will derived from his communications

to their souls. Compare Is. liv. 13; Acts ii. 17, 18. — This experimental knowledge of the will of God makes a wide distinction between the true people of God and other men. *|| For all shall know me*, etc.; more properly, *For they*, that is, my people, *shall all know me*. It is not merely an intellectual knowledge of God, designed to be spread throughout the human family, that is here meant; but a knowledge characteristic of his real people, such a knowledge as is associated with love and obedience to him and with the forgiveness of their sins. All, of whatever age and of whatever position, all his true people embraced in this new covenant shall *thus* know the Lord, and not need the exhortation to acquire knowledge respecting him. This spiritual knowledge of the Lord and of his will, and a heart conformed to his laws, are promised in the new covenant.

12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness*. The covenant by which the people of God sustain this relation to him does not overlook the fact of their sinfulness, but takes distinct cognizance of it as requiring mercy for them; and this mercy is promised. *|| Will I remember no more*; not that God can lose the knowledge of his chosen people's sins, but that the pardon of them will be so complete that it will amount to a ceasing to remember them; they shall never be brought forward as charged against them: an act of amnesty on the part of God is passed, and their offences are no more to be named. — This new covenant, on which rests the gospel, the dispensation of mercy and eternal life through Jesus Christ, is distinguished from the

¹³ In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

old, particularly by its consisting of promises on the part of God. In fulfilment of these promises, a renewed heart is given which harmonizes with the will of God, so that obedience springs spontaneously from it; those who are embraced in this covenant are acknowledged by God as his people, and in correspondence to this he avows himself their God; they are divinely taught his will; compare John xiv. 26; xvi. 14, 15; and full remission of sins is bestowed on them. Compare Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 25-27. The difference between this covenant and the old is at once discerned by comparing with it the specimens of covenant-engagements into which the ancient Israelites entered with God, and in which they promised obedience to his commands as the condition on which he was to bestow on them his blessings. The old covenant was not, then, a covenant of *grace*, of promises to bestow undeserved favor and to assure the people of that favor; but a *mutual compact*, wherein blessings from God were conditioned on obedience from the people, which obedience, though there was a readiness to promise it, there was not a heart to render, and which therefore was not rendered when temptations to disobedience were encountered. See Ex. xix. 3-9; xxiv. 3-8; Deut. xxvi. 16-19; xxix. 10-28. Compare Deut. v. 27-33; Josh. xxiv. 16-25. A covenant of this nature cannot secure eternal life to men; hence a new covenant was necessary, founded on forgiving mercy and saving grace.—The difference between the old covenant and the new is the same as is noticed in Rom. x. 5-10 between “the righteousness which is of the law” and “the righteousness which is of faith.” “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh, in this wise, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

13. *In that he saith, A new covenant*, etc. In denominating this a *new covenant*, God has pronounced the first an *old, antiquated covenant*. || *Now that which decayeth*, etc. Whatever is become antiquated and old, so as to be unfit for use, is near to being put out of sight, near to destruction.—This general remark respecting things which are grown old and are no further of service, is applicable to the first covenant. That, too, is old and useless; it is annulled. As the whole Mosaic economy was vitally connected with that covenant, it also, as a religious dispensation, was to be annulled; and when the new covenant was established by the death of Christ, it reached the point of its abolishment, giving way to the dispensation of Christ, which is founded on the covenant of grace, and which assures to the believing people of God pardon and eternal life. Compare John xvii. 2, 3; x. 27, 28.

CHAPTER IX.

Christ having been mentioned as the High-priest of the new covenant, viii. 2, 6, the old covenant of the Mosaic dispensation, and the new of the Christian, having also been distinctly brought to view, viii. 8-12, the priestly ministration connected with each covenant respectively is next shown. That under the old covenant was performed in the earthly tabernacle as erected and furnished with its various appurtenances by divine direction; that could procure only external purification; it could not cleanse the conscience in the sight of God, ix. 1-10.—The ministration under the new covenant is performed in the heavenly tabernacle, agreeably to the representation in viii. 2; this cleanses the conscience towards God, and bestows fitness to render to him acceptable

CHAPTER IX.

¹ THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. ² For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the show-bread; which is called the sanctuary. ³ And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; ⁴ which had the golden censer,

worship, vs. 11-14. — The resemblance and the contrast between the two covenants and the corresponding dispensations are thus both kept before the reader's mind.

1. This verse commences the illustration of the sentiment presented in viii. 6, that the priestly ministration of Christ is more excellent than that of the priests under the old covenant; this sentiment being the topic of the present part of the epistle. — *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service*; or, Then, indeed, also the first covenant had ordinances of worship; that is, prescribed rites of service, particular reference being had to the priestly service. *|| And a worldly sanctuary*; a sanctuary composed of earthly materials, — wood and other materials, — and which was furnished with needed earthly appurtenances. This *sanctuary* was the sacred tent, or tabernacle, which was erected agreeably to instructions from God to Moses. Ex. xxv. 8, 9.

2. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, etc.* The word *tabernacle* in this verse and in the third does not mean the *whole structure*, as it does in viii. 5, but is used in a more particular sense, as designating the first, or outer, apartment of the tabernacle. The word *sanctuary* in the preceding verse means the tabernacle as a whole; in this verse and the third, notice is taken of the division of the structure into two apartments, the first, or outer, and the second, or inner. The original in this second verse would be better understood by translating it thus: *For there was built the first tent, or apartment, namely, the outer*; this was denominated the *holy place*, in distinction from the *inner*, which was called the *most holy*. Ex. xxvi. 33. The in-

ner was separated from the outer by a very costly veil, or curtain, Ex. xxvi. 31-33, and the outer was defended by a less costly hanging, or curtain, which answered the purpose of a door. Ex. xxvi. 36, 37. *|| Wherein was the candlestick*; the splendid candlestick, or chandelier, of pure gold, with six branches, furnishing, together with the main stem, seven places for lights. Ex. xxv. 31-39. *|| The table and the show-bread*; the table, which was overlaid with gold, and on which the show-bread was to be deposited. Ex. xxv. 23-30. The *show-bread* consisted of twelve cakes, set on this table every Sabbath in two piles, with frankincense spread on them. They were thus *set forth* or *shown* before the Lord, and probably represented the twelve tribes, who were pledged to honor the name and maintain the worship of the Lord. This bread was to be eaten only by the high-priest and his sons in the *holy* apartment, and the frankincense was to be offered by fire unto the Lord. Every Sabbath a fresh supply was to be placed there; thus the table was constantly furnished with the bread. Lev. xxiv. 5-9. *|| Which is called the sanctuary*; more correctly, *the holy*, that is, *holy apartment*, or place.

3. *After the second veil*; beyond the second veil, or the costly curtain between the two apartments. *|| The tabernacle, etc.*; properly, *the apartment* of the tabernacle which was called *holy of holies*, — a Hebraistic expression for the *most holy*, or, as here translated, *the holiest of all*. This was regarded as specially the presence-room of Jehovah, Ex. xxv. 22; Lev. xvi. 2; also, note on viii. 2; and access into it was forbidden, verse 7 of this chapter, to every one but the high-priest.

4. *Which had the golden censer*. This

and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and

censer was probably the one which was employed on the day of the annual atonement, Lev. xvi. 12. In consequence of the unusual solemnity of that day's observances, it would seem that a censer was specially and exclusively appropriated to the occasion, and deposited within the most sacred apartment of the tabernacle. As the altar of incense was overlaid with gold, and was called the *golden altar*, Ex. xl. 26, and its horns and rings were of gold, and its staves were overlaid with gold, Ex. xxx. 3-5, it is congruous that the censer also was of gold. It is indeed remarkable that, in the minute particularity of details in the books of Exodus and Leviticus respecting the contents and appurtenances of the tabernacle, no mention occurs of a golden censer thus appropriated and deposited. But the statement in this epistle is for us adequate testimony; and the writer would not have made it, if his Hebrew readers had no knowledge of such a censer. || *The ark of the covenant.* The ark was a chest, about six feet long, three broad, and three deep, lined within and without with pure gold, furnished with golden rings and staves for the purpose of transportation during the journeyings in the wilderness, and while the tabernacle had no fixed location, and with a cover of pure gold, which was called the *mercy-seat*, since the LORD there made a special manifestation of himself to the high-priest as granting mercy to the people. Ex. xxv. 10-21; Lev. xvi. 2. It was called the *ark of the covenant*, also of the *testimony*, because the ten commandments, which were the ground of the covenant between God and the Israelites, and of the statutes, or precepts, which he enjoined on them, and which they promised to obey, Ex. xix. 8; xxiv. 3, were, as engraven on tablets of stone, deposited in it. See Deut. iv. 13, 14; ix. 9-11; x. 1-5; Ex. xxxi. 18; xxxiv. 29. || *Wherein was the golden pot that had manna.* Shortly after the manna was provided

for the daily food of the Israelites in the desert, Ex. xvi. 14, 15, Moses, by divine command, ordered a quantity of it to be deposited in a vessel and preserved as a remembrancer for future generations. Ex. xvi. 32-34. The expression in the original command, Lay it up *before the LORD*, evidently required it to be placed in the most holy apartment. In obedience to this command, Aaron laid it up *before the Testimony*, Ex. xvi. 34; that is, as appears from this epistle, within the ark and near the tablets containing the ten commandments. — The material of which the vessel containing the manna was made is not mentioned in the original command, Ex. xvi. 33; but, as the furniture in the holy of holies was of gold, doubtless this vessel was also a golden one; as indeed it is expressly so called in the Greek translation of the Hebrew in Ex. xvi. 33. || *And Aaron's rod that budded.* At the murmuring against Moses and Aaron, occasioned by the destruction of Korah and his associates with their company, Num. 16th chapter, the LORD commanded twelve rods, representing the twelve tribes, to be deposited in the tabernacle, marked with the names of the tribes, excepting that, instead of the name of Levi, the name of Aaron was written. In order that the dispute might be decided which had arisen concerning Aaron's being selected by him as the priest, and his family as the priestly family, Num. xvi. 3, God promised, Num. xvii. 1-5, that the rod which belonged to the man whom he had chosen should bear blossoms. On the following day, the rods were brought out in the presence of all the people; and the rod marked with Aaron's name "was budded, and brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." It was then ordered by the LORD, that Aaron's rod should be again placed "before the Testimony," for a token in confirmation of Aaron's divine appointment to the priesthood. Num. xvii. 6-11. || *The tables of the covenant;*

Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;⁵ and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

⁶ Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of *God*. ⁷ But into the second *went* the high-priest

the two tablets inscribed with the ten commandments which the people covenanted to obey. Ex. xix. 5-8; xxiv. 3; xxxiv. 1, 4; xl. 20; Deut. x. 1, 2. — In the ark, when it was subsequently deposited in the temple of Solomon, we learn from 1 Kings viii. 9, 2 Chron. v. 10, there was nothing but the two tablets of stone. This fact, however, is not inconsistent with the statement here made; for this statement has respect to the *Mosaic tabernacle*, not to the temple of Solomon; and doubtless in the various removals of the ark, and calamities which befell it before the time of Solomon, the other articles had been taken out and lost. The purpose of the epistle did not require anything to be said concerning the *temple*, inasmuch as it was the *Mosaic tabernacle*, erected and furnished for priestly service by divine direction, that was here contemplated.

5. *And over it*; that is, over the ark. || *The cherubims of glory*, etc. In the material and figurative representation of God as dwelling in the sacred tabernacle, the cherubim were regarded as attendants on God, who, by the visible token of a cloud, doubtless a resplendent cloud, appeared on the mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. 2. They were cherubim of *glory*, in consequence of their position near this glorious appearance; also, because their shining appearance would symbolize the dazzling splendor in which the Lord was conceived of as dwelling. See Ex. xxiv. 10. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 16. Two golden cherubim were attached to the cover of the ark, one at each end, facing each other, and looking downward to the cover, which was called the mercy-seat, and with wings extended on high (compare Ezek. i. 6, 11), covering the mercy-seat. See Ex. xxv. 18-20; xxxvii. 7-9. On, or above, this mercy-seat, and from be-

tween the cherubim, the Lord was represented as manifesting himself. Ex. xxv. 22; Num. vii. 89. || *Of which we cannot now speak particularly*. Concerning these things pertaining to the tabernacle, the purpose of this epistle and the topic in this part of it did not require a particular account. The writer proceeds, therefore, at once to the precise point in hand, namely, the priestly service performed in the *Mosaic tabernacle*, and the priestly service of Christ in the heavenly tabernacle, or in heaven.

6. *Now when these things were thus ordained*; set in order, fully prepared; the things already mentioned, namely, the outer and the inner apartments of the tabernacle, and the respective furniture of each being thus prepared, set in order, for the priestly services. || *The priests went always*; the ordinary priests went at all times, daily, and as often as any occasion required either sacrifices or oblations. See Ex. xxvii. 21; xxviii. 38, 39; xxx. 7, 8. || *Into the first tabernacle*; into the first, or outer, apartment of the tabernacle, called in verse 2, as explained in the note, *the holy*. Access to this apartment was of daily and constant occurrence. || *Accomplishing the service of God*; literally, *performing the services*, the sacred rites, the services assigned to the priests, both the morning and evening sacrifices and other set services, together with occasional sacrifices and offerings as the circumstances of individuals required.

7. *But into the second*; the second, or inner, apartment of the tabernacle, called *the holy of holies*, or *the holiest of all*, ver. 2. || *Went the high-priest alone once every year*. See Ex. xxx. 10; Lev. xvi. 2, 29, 30, 34. No one was allowed to enter the *holy of holies* but the high-priest, Lev. xvi. 17, and he only on the day of the annual atone-

alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: ⁸ the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was

ment for the people, as prescribed in Lev. 16th chapter. During that day, however, the appointed services would require him to go in and out at least three times; first, when he offered incense before the Lord, Lev. xvi. 12; next, when he offered up the blood of the bullock which had been slain for the sins of himself and his family, Lev. xvi. 11-14, compare verse 6; again, when he offered up the blood of the goat which had been slain for the sins of the people. Lev. xvi. 15. || *Not without blood.* This is so particularly stated, because the blood of the animal slain as a sacrifice was indispensable to expiation. Compare ver. 22. See Lev. xvii. 11, "For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood was indicative of death which had been undergone as preliminary to forgiveness, and as showing the ill-desert and the liability of the transgressor; it kept the thought of guilt and deserved punishment before the people's minds. || *Which he offered for himself,* Lev. xvi. 6. || *And for the errors of the people.* The word *for errors* means, more strictly, *acts of ignorance*, and is a mild expression for *sins*. The Jewish law made a distinction between sins of *ignorance*, Lev. iv. 2, 13, 22, 27, and sins of *presumption*, that is, such as could not admit of excuse or palliation, but were committed in known disregard of the divine will; for a pardon of such sins no provision was made, Ex. xxi. 14; Num. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xvii. 12. Such words, then, as *errors*, *ignorance*, would naturally be employed to designate ordinary sins, or sin in general. See note on v. 2.

8. *The Holy Ghost this signifying, etc.* The rule that admission into the *most holy* apartment was not granted to the people, but was limited exclusively to the high-priest, and that even he had access to it only one day in the year, was a divine figurative declaration that the way into the true *holy* of

holies, heaven itself, also the way of personal access to God in prayer and other acts of worship, was not yet made clearly known, was not yet laid open so as to be obvious to *all*, so long as the *first*, that is, the *outer*, apartment of the tabernacle was still standing, and still in use, as separated from the inner apartment. So long as the distinction was observed between the *holy* and the *most holy* place, and access was not allowed to the people into the most holy, obscurity rested on the subject of entrance into heaven, God's abode, and of access to him in supplication and praise. But when this distinction was terminated by the removal, the rending, Luke xxiii. 45, of the veil which separated the inner from the outer apartment, then the way into the most holy was unobstructed, access was freely given to all alike; that is, in the way of explanation, the death of Christ abolished the distinction between the inner and the outer, removed the separation between men and God, and opened the way to him as on his throne of grace hearing the prayers of all believers, and as on his throne of glory welcoming them to the bliss and glory of heaven. — Not that knowledge of heaven, admission to it, and access, in personal worship, to God with a peaceful reliance on his mercy, were not granted before the death of Christ; but the coming and the death of Christ shed new and all necessary light on these topics, John viii. 12; 2 Tim. i. 10, and were indispensable to the complete reconciliation between men and God. Rom. v. 1, 11; Eph. ii. 13, 16, 17. — The Mosaic tabernacle, which is spoken of in this epistle, and which furnished the basis of its representations, was not, indeed, in existence when the epistle was written, nor when the death of Christ took place, but it had been transferred to the temple of Solomon, 2 Chron. i. 3; 1 Kings viii. 4, and though Solo-

yet standing: ⁹ which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; ¹⁰ which *stood* only in meats and

mon's temple had been despoiled of its contents and burned up, 2 Kings xxiv. 13; xxv. 9, yet the tabernacle had its counterpart within that temple which was standing in the time of Christ. The tabernacle might, then, well be employed as an abiding ground of instructive representation.

9. Which *was* a figure for the time then present, etc.; which first apartment was a symbol whose significance, ver. 8, extends to the present time, that is, the time at which this epistle was written, the word *then* not being authorized by the original; in which both gifts and sacrifices are still offered that cannot, as to the conscience, make perfect the worshipper, the person in whose behalf the gifts and sacrifices are offered. These offerings cannot procure for him a perfect expiation of his sins in respect to his conscience towards God, so as to impart an abiding freedom from a sense of guilt and to give him settled peace of mind. || *Were offered*; properly, *are offered*; the present tense being here used in the original. The offering of sacrifices and the other parts of the ritual service were still observed by the Jews when this epistle was written. The practice continued until the national calamities and the destruction of the temple, about the year 70 of the Christian era, brought it to an end. The tabernacle, and particularly, in this connection, the first apartment of it, still answered the purpose of a symbol. || *Him that did the service*; literally, *the worshipper*; him in whose behalf these acts of worship, or priestly service, are performed. The idea is the same as is expressed in x. 1, by the words, "the comers thenceunto;" that is, the persons who came to the altar with their sacrifices, and in whose behalf the priests offered the sacrifices. || *Make the worshipper perfect*; make him perfect, or complete, as to expiation, so as to be pardoned in the sight

of God and to obtain peace of conscience towards him. — The Jewish sacrifices were designed to be available, not for the pardon of sin against God, viewed as the moral Governor of the universe, and for the salvation of the soul; but for removing the penalty incurred by transgression against the Mosaic code which regulated the affairs of the nation, considered as an external and temporal people of God. Transgressions of the national code were remitted by observing the prescribed rites; the remission, thus external and temporal, symbolized the true forgiveness of sins through the great Sacrifice, offered, not for an individual, nor for a particular nation, but for the human race.

10. This verse is very obscure, in the original as well as in the translation; because the sentence is an imperfect one, and important manuscripts differ from one another in regard to one of the leading words. The following, including a part of the 9th verse, may be taken as a preferable rendering, in accordance with some approved manuscripts of the original text: "Gifts and sacrifices that cannot make the worshipper perfect as to the conscience; fleshly statutes, imposed until the time of reformation, in respect only to meats and drinks and various immersions." — The idea, doubtless, is, that the statutes of the Jewish law were of an external and ceremonial nature, designed to be only temporary, and, as preliminary to a new and spiritual dispensation, to cease when that new dispensation, the *reformed* order of things, here called the *time of reformation*, under the Messiah, should be introduced. — The 9th verse having declared that the gifts and sacrifices of the Jewish law could not procure a perfect expiation, the present verse makes a statement explanatory of the 9th, and, at the same time, suggestive of the ceremonial and temporary char-

drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

¹¹ But Christ being come a High-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made

acter of the entire system of Jewish prescriptions, or appointments. By this comparatively disparaging view of the Mosaic dispensation, the parabolic, or figurative, use of the outer apartment of the tabernacle suggested in the preceding verse would be more deeply impressed, and the way be prepared for introducing the thought of Christ, as the High-priest, having entered into the heavenly holy of holies, and procured for his people thorough and enduring remission and acceptance with God. — *In meats and drinks*; in respect to articles of food and drink. The Jewish law made a distinction in regard to such articles, forbidding some as rendering a person ceremonially unclean, and permitting others. See Lev. 11th chapter; Deut. xiv. 3–21. || *And divers washings*; that is, the various ablutions which were enjoined, both of persons and of things that had become ceremonially unclean. These ablutions appear to have been entire, not partial, both as to persons and as to things. Compare Lev. xi. 32; xiv. 8, 9. Hence the original word here used, *immersions*. || *Carnal ordinances*; statutes, or precepts, pertaining to the flesh, the body, and to external things; to ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, and to the standing of a person in reference to membership in the Jewish congregation and his participation in its privileges. || *Imposed on them until*, etc.; enjoined on the Jewish people until the reformed order of things should commence, at the coming of the Messiah. The dispensation by Christ was to be the period of amendment, in which particularly piety and mutual justice were to have sway, and God was thus, eminently, to reign in the souls of men. — *The time of reformation, or amendment*, is also called *times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*, Acts iii. 19, and the *restitution of all things* foretold by the prophets, Acts iii. 21. — The

priestly service in the earthly tabernacle, then, was of a ceremonial and external nature, not securing true peace with God: it was also merely temporary in its duration and effects. — Far different is the priestly service of Christ in the heavenly tabernacle, as appears from the contrast presented in the following verses.

11, 12. *But Christ being come*, etc. But Christ, having made his appearance as High-priest of the good things which had been promised, namely, a temper of mind conformed to the will of God and an entire blotting out of sins, viii. 10–12, entered by means of a more excellent and perfect outer apartment, not constructed by human hands, not of this visible creation, into the heavenly holy of holies, having procured for us an everlasting redemption from sin, not by the blood of sacrificed animals, but by his own sacrificial blood. || *A High-priest of good things to come*; literally, of the good things to come, namely, those things which were to be bestowed through the mediation of Christ, as the High-priest. || *By a greater and more perfect tabernacle*. The word here rendered *tabernacle*, since it stands connected, in verse 12, with *the holy place*, more correctly, *the holy of holies*, means the *first*, or *outer*, apartment of the heavenly tabernacle, corresponding to that in the earthly tabernacle, through, or by means of, which the high-priest had to pass into the most holy apartment. The conception of a tabernacle in heaven, of which the earthly was a copy and symbol, was still before the writer's mind. || *Not made with hands, that is, not of this building*; literally, *not of this creation*. As in viii. 2, Christ is regarded as the officiating High-priest of the holy of holies in heaven, and as the outer apartment of the tabernacle spoken of in that passage is said to have been set up *by the Lord*, not *by man*, so here the structure

with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹² neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; ¹⁴ how much more

is declared to be not the work of human hands, nor to be of this visible creation: it is a heavenly structure.

12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, etc.*; nor by means of the blood of goats and calves, as prescribed for the Jewish high-priest, Lev. xvi. 5, 7, etc.; ix. 2; in other words, nor by taking with him, as the medium of atonement, the blood of these animals slain in sacrifice, *but by his own blood*, by virtue of his own blood shed for the remission of sins, he entered into the inner sanctuary on high, the heavenly holy of holies, in our behalf. — His voluntary death on the cross was the offering up of himself as a sacrificial victim; and, in order to draw a perfect parallel, he is represented as carrying the blood which was then shed into the heavenly holy of holies and offering it for the expiation of his people's sins. The representation is, of course, a kind of picture, designed to furnish a similitude between the Jewish high-priest taking the blood of the prescribed sacrificial victim into the most holy place and offering it for the Jewish people, Lev. xvi. 15, and Christ as High-priest procuring, by virtue of *his death*, forgiveness for his people and acceptance with God. Christ is, therefore, represented as taking his own blood into the heavenly holy of holies and offering it up to God before the mercy-seat. || *Once*; that is, once for all, once forever; in distinction from the Jewish high-priest, who went into the holy of holies year by year to repeat the sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. 29. || *Into the holy place*; the same as is called in verse 8 *the holiest of all*; that is, the holy of holies in the heavenly tabernacle, into which Christ is conceived of as having gone to officiate in the capacity of High-priest for his followers. || *Eternal redemption*; redemption from sin;

everlasting, not temporary, like the redemption from the penalties of the Mosaic ritual procured by the Jewish high-priest, which must be bestowed again and again, year by year. So, in Eph. i. 6, 7, the apostle declares that God hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

13. *If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean*. See Lev. iv. 3, 28; xvi. 3, 5; Num. xix. 2-22. *The unclean* are persons defiled in the view of the Levitical law. See Lev. v. 2. The occasions of contracting such defilement were numerous. || *Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh*; procures purification in the view of the Law, and thus restores the person to the rights and privileges of the Jews considered as the national people of God. The Hebrews were regarded as a *holy people*, in that they were set apart from other nations and were required to abstain from the defilements of the Gentiles, Ex. xix. 6; Lev. xi. 42-45; xviii. 26-30; xix. 2; xx. 22-26; and when by any circumstances a Hebrew had contracted defilement, he might become purified by the prescribed ceremonial observances, and continue to be acknowledged as belonging to the holy people and entitled to their privileges.

14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, etc.* Such is the contrast between the blood of irrational animals slain in sacrifice and the blood of Christ, that as in point of *worth and dignity* no proportion can be instituted between them and him, so in point of *efficacy* the blood of Christ inconceivably transcends theirs. It reaches to the inmost soul of the penitent sinner; it relieves his conscience in the sight of God from the guilt of sin,

shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

and cleanses him from its defilement, so that he becomes a true servant of God, and is at peace with him. || *Through the eternal Spirit*; rather, in accordance with the original, *through, or by means of, an eternal spirit*. These words have reference to Christ personally, and signify his eternal spiritual nature. The word *spirit* is elsewhere used in reference to Christ. See Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 45; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; 1 Pet. iii. 18. Compare John i. 1, 2; xvii. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16. It was this spiritual nature which made his offering so acceptable and efficacious. A contrast is here made between the blood of mere animals offered in sacrifice and the blood of Christ: those animals had only an earthly, temporal, perishable nature, besides being incapable of an intelligent, responsible, and cordial assent to their being sacrificed; but Christ had an eternal, spiritual nature. The difference between them and him in reference to the value of a sacrificial offering results from the fact that he was THE SON OF GOD; his sacrificial offering had a dignity and value corresponding to his divine nature, so that it could remove the guilt and defilement of sin in the soul, while the blood of irrational animals was intended only to relieve from the penalties of the Mosaic law incurred by ceremonial pollution; their blood could avail no further, and was, at best, only an emblem of the blood of Christ which takes away sin. His offering was an intelligent one, with full consent to its meaning and design: HE offered up HIMSELF. Compare John x. 17, 18; Gal. i. 4. || *Without spot*. It was required by the Mosaic law that an animal selected for sacrifice should be entirely free from blemish. Lev. xxii. 18-24. So Christ was entirely sinless; and for the redemption of men from the impurity and condemnation of sin he, thus spotless, perfectly holy, gave up HIMSELF an offering and a sacrifice to God. Eph.

v. 2. || *Purge your conscience*; deliver your conscience from the guilt and defilement of sin and make you acceptable to God. || *From dead works*; from sinful works, such as conduct to spiritual and eternal death. || *To serve the living God*; so as, by a righteous course of life, to serve God in spirit and in truth, the God who has life in himself, and who over lives to recompense men according to their deeds. Rom. ii. 6. — In contrast, then, with the service performed in the earthly sanctuary, where the Jewish high-priest presented the blood of the animal sacrifices, and procured for the people an external, ceremonial purification, Christ, the High-priest in the heavenly sanctuary, has presented his own blood, having offered up himself as a sacrifice, and has obtained for us spiritual purification, a cleansing of the conscience. — The two main points of contrast are, the inherent *value* of his offering and its *efficacy*.

15-28. It was indispensable to the validity of the new covenant and to our coming into possession of its benefits, that Christ should be its mediator and should suffer *death*. — The everlasting bliss of heaven is spoken of as an *inheritance*, devised for us through this covenant; hence, the covenant resembles a *testamentary* document, and may, therefore, be illustrated by the rule which regulates the validity of testaments and the descent of property to *heirs*. In the case of a human testament, the testator's *death* is necessary in order that the inheritance may be entered on; so Christ's *death* was indispensable to the validity and efficacy of this covenant. Vs. 15-17. In conformity to the requisition of *death* for the validity of covenants (oriental usage sometimes requiring this even in covenants not testamentary), even the first, the Mosaic, covenant required blood, as indicating death, for its being confirmed and held sacred. Vs. 18-23. It was necessary, then, that the earthly copies of heavenly things,

¹⁵ And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they

that is, the tabernacle and its appurtenances, should be made available, as to the benefits connected with them, by means of the sacrificed animals and the rites connected with the offering of them; but the heavenly things themselves, that is, the heavenly tabernacle, or, without a figure, heaven itself, by a superior sacrifice, namely, that of Christ; for he has actually entered into heaven itself, to appear as the High-priest in our behalf. But it is not necessary that he should frequently offer up himself, like as the high-priest was required to enter into the holy of holies *year by year* with the blood of a sacrifice; Christ has *once forever* made his appearance for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of himself. Vs. 23-26. The divine appointment of men's dying *once for all* is then produced as a parallel to Christ's offering up himself *once for all*. As men die but once, and after that comes, not repeated death, but judgment, so Christ, having been offered up once forever to bear our sins, will appear a second time, not as bearing sins and dying on account of them, but as bestowing salvation. Vs. 27, 28.

15. *For this cause*; that is, on account of the efficacy of Christ's death in procuring forgiveness of sin, freeing the conscience from a sense of guilt, and bestowing fitness to serve God in spirit and in truth. || *He is the mediator of the new testament*; strictly, of the new covenant. Our translators deemed it advisable to employ here the word *testament* on account of a resemblance which is noticed in verses 16-18 between this covenant and a human testament, or last will. The original word is the one usually translated *covenant*, as in viii. 6, 8, 10. — It is only the new covenant which makes the needed and adequate provision for pardon, for delivering us from sin and fitting us to render acceptable service to God; and, in order that this covenant might be established and its benefits secured, Christ became its medi-

ator; that is, he interposed between God and men on the basis of this new covenant, and through him, and only through him, its blessings can be obtained. — Since, also, it is only this covenant which makes provision for the forgiveness of sins and for redemption from their guilt and power, the sins of those who lived during the first, or old, covenant and in all preceding generations could be removed only by virtue of this covenant; and consequently, the High-priest, who was to mediate on the basis of it, must be able to present an offering whose efficacy could extend over all *past* ages as well as the present and the future. || *That by means of death*, etc.; more correctly, *in order that, his death having taken place*, etc. Christ is the mediator of this new covenant, in order that, his death having taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, as well as under the second, those who have been called of God and have accepted his invitation might receive the fulfilment of the promise made to them of the everlasting inheritance; that is, that they might enter on the promised everlasting inheritance. Christ, with his eternal spirit, offered up himself; and by virtue of this offering the promised eternal inheritance, namely, the bliss of heaven, could be bestowed on the people of God, those who lived in ages long before the offering actually took place, as well as those living since that event. || *For the redemption of the transgressions*; better, *for redemption from the transgressions*; that is, for deliverance from the condemnation due to the transgressions. || *That were under the first testament*; that is, transgressions which were committed during the first covenant, during the Mosaic dispensation, before the coming and death of Christ. — The death of Christ being, by anticipation, efficacious for the pardon and salvation of men during the Mosaic age, its efficacy extended back, beyond doubt, to

which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. ¹⁸ Whereupon

the very commencement of human transgressions; and thus, it appears, it was designed to cover the whole period of the human race. Compare Rom. iii. 25; 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. In Rev. xiii. 8, Christ is also spoken of as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." || *They which are called*; those who have been called of God to the duties, privileges, and final bliss of the heavenly kingdom; those who have been chosen of God as partakers of eternal life. See Rom. viii. 30; ix. 24; 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Tim. i. 9. Compare Acts xiii. 48. || *Might receive the promise*; that is, agreeably to the current usage of the original expression, might receive the *fulfilment* of the promise, or the *promised blessing*. || *Of eternal inheritance*; more correctly, of *THE eternal inheritance*, the eternal bliss and glory of heaven, which have always been included in the promises to the true people of God. Compare iv. 1, 2.

16. The necessity of Christ's death to the validity of the new covenant is now illustrated by the somewhat similar case of a human testament conveying an inheritance. The possession of heaven had been mentioned as an *inheritance* to be entered on by virtue of the death of Christ ratifying the new covenant. Now this new covenant, in that it promises an *inheritance*, is similar to a *testament*; and its similarity extends, not only to its conveying an inheritance, but also to its requiring the event of *death* in order to be valid. — *For where a testament is*; strictly, a *covenant*; and here, that particular kind of covenant denominated a *testament*, a last will. — The transition from speaking of a *covenant* to the thought of a *testament* was easy and perfectly natural, since, in the Greek language, the same word which is translated *covenant* signifies also a *testament*. It had a more comprehensive

meaning than the word *covenant* with us; and this additional signification is here naturally availed of for illustration, as coinciding with the view that *death*, on the part of Christ, was necessary to the validity of the new covenant. || *There must also of necessity be the death of the testator*. The death of the testator is indispensable to the validity of a testament; more than this, agreeably to the expression in the original; the death of the testator must be *adduced*, as a determined fact.

17. *For a testament is of force after men are dead*; more literally, a *testament is firm*, or valid, *when resting on dead persons*; that is, a testament requires death as a basis on which its confirmation rests: so long as the testator is *alive*, the testament has no force. — So in regard to this new covenant which conveys the eternal *inheritance*, and in that particular may be likened to a testament, death must intervene in order that it may be valid. — It is the single point of the indispensableness of *death* to the validity of this covenant that is here had in view; the resemblance to a human testament does not extend to the point that the testator himself must become a dead person. In point of fact, Christ, on whose death the validity of the new covenant is based, did not yield himself to death in the capacity of *the maker* of the covenant, the testator, but as *the sacrificial victim* by whose death the covenant was ratified. — In comparisons and similitudes generally, we do not seek for resemblance at *all* points, but only in regard to the special point in hand; other resemblances being passed over, and dissimilarities not being taken into the account.

18. *Whereupon*; more correctly, *Whence*; that is, since a testament, or, more correctly, according to the original, a covenant, requires death as a condition of its validity. — In the

neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.
¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and

usage of the Orientals, covenants of special importance, and requiring special ratification, were confirmed by the slaying of an animal, the cutting of the carcass into two parts, and the walking of the contracting parties between the divided parts. Compare Jer. xxxiv. 18-20. This ceremony signified that should either of the parties violate the contract he would be held worthy of death. So common was this usage that the expression to cut a covenant signified to make a covenant. || *Neither the first testament, etc.* In harmony with the well known requisition of death for the ratification of covenants, even the first testament, more properly, covenant, by which, on condition of obedience, the Hebrew people were to receive as an inheritance the land of Canaan, with kindred blessings, temporal and spiritual, which covenant, therefore, might even be regarded as of a testamentary character, this first covenant was not confirmed without blood, as representing a death which had been endured for its confirmation. || *Was dedicated;* more correctly, *was consecrated*, made sacred, confirmed as a sacred engagement, so that it could not be violated without such criminality as would deserve death; in other words, it was solemnly sanctioned and assented to as binding. — As the blessings of the Mosaic covenant were viewed in the light of an inheritance, compare Ex. xxxii. 13; Deut. i. 38; xii. 10, the resemblance which it thus bore to a testament would be readily seen, and, in addition to the ordinary requisition of a death in reference to covenants, would suggest a resemblance, also, between it and a testament, in the requisition of death for its validity. — It may be said further, that, as the old covenant was a foreshadowing of the new, the old required blood, indicating death, for its ratification, as foreshowing THE DEATH which would be required for ratifying the new.

19. *For when Moses had spoken every precept.* The commandments and statutes comprised in chapters 20-23 of Exodus, and delivered to the people by Moses, are here referred to. || *According to the law;* according to the requisition that Moses should communicate to the people all that God should enjoin on them. See Ex. xix. 19, 21, 22; xxi. 1; xxiv. 3. || *He took the blood of calves and of goats, etc.* The transaction referred to is related in Ex. xxiv. 5-8. — The statement in the epistle is more particular in details than in Exodus, and was, doubtless, derived from the historical accounts and the explanations which had been handed down among the Hebrew people. — The word here translated calves corresponds to *oxen*, in Ex. xxiv. 5; that is, *young bullocks*. In addition to the sacrificing of bullocks, the burnt offerings, mentioned in Ex. xxiv. 5 were probably of goats, as these animals were often used for this purpose. See Lev. i. 10; iv. 24. *Water*, not mentioned in the passage of Exodus referred to, was probably, as on other occasions, Lev. xiv. 5, 50, mingled with the blood, in order that there might be a sufficiency of the required liquid. Water was also used in the Mosaic ceremonies by itself as a cleansing element. The scarlet wool is the same as is simply called scarlet in the Old Testament, as in Lev. xiv. 4, 6, 51. Josephus, also, the Jewish historian, in his Antiquities, iv. 4, 6, employs the expression scarlet wool in describing the materials for purification. It was, doubtless, wool dyed with scarlet, or purple. A quantity of this would seem to have been attached to a bunch of hyssop, for the purpose of taking up the liquid and sprinkling it. Lev. xiv. 6, 7, 51. Compare Num. xix. 18; Ex. xii. 22. As the use of scarlet wool and hyssop was so common in purifications prescribed in the Mosaic ritual, they were doubtless used on the occasion here referred to,

sprinkled both the book and all the people, ²⁰ saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. ²¹ Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the

though no mention is made of this in the account given in Ex. xxiv. 5-8. Earlier religious practices, which had originated from divine direction, were subsequently sanctioned and incorporated with the finally established system of ritual solemnities; so that the more full details of ceremonial practices in the Mosaic ritual shed light on practices at a time before that ritual was completely formed and prescribed.

—Hyssop was sometimes an ingredient in a purifying mixture, as in Num. xix. 6; and sometimes it was used, probably in the stalk, as furnishing, besides the leaves, a convenient handle for taking up the liquid which was to be sprinkled, as in Num. xix. 18. — Mention is also made in the Old Testament of *cedar wood* in connection with hyssop, as in Num. xix. 6; Lev. xiv. 6. Probably the cedar wood was employed, like the hyssop, both as an ingredient and as a convenient handle. — The combination of the various articles mentioned in this 19th verse evidently present the twofold idea of *expiation*, or atonement, for sin, and *purification* from it, prefiguring *reconciliation* with God and *holiness* of heart through the GREAT SACRIFICE. — || *And sprinkled both the book*; that is, *the roll*, on which, according to Ex. xxiv. 4, "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." See, also, Ex. xxiv. 7. The circumstance of sprinkling the book, though not mentioned in Exodus, would be almost a matter of course, since the altar also was on this occasion sprinkled over with the blood. The occasion was one of deep solemnity, when an impression was to be made concerning the purity of God and of everything connected with his service, and a salutary dread was to be awakened of incurring his displeasure. || *And all the people*. See Ex. xxiv. 8, "Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people;" that is, on such of the people as stood sufficiently near. They represented the people generally, or all the people.

20. *Saying, This is the blood of the testament, etc.*; more correctly, *of the covenant*. Ex. xxiv. 8. *The blood of the covenant* is the blood by means of which the covenant was confirmed.

21. *Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, etc.* This transaction occurred at a different time from that mentioned in the 19th verse, since the tabernacle was not erected till a later date; the command for building it and providing its furniture being recorded in the 25th chapter of Exodus. The act here mentioned is commonly believed to have stood connected with the command in Ex. xl. 9, "Thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it and all the vessels thereof; and it shall be holy." No mention, however, is made in this command of *sprinkling blood* on the tabernacle, but only of anointing it with oil. Still, the sprinkling of blood may have been a part of the ceremony, though not mentioned in the recorded command, inasmuch as a similar case can be adduced. For in Ex. xl. 12-15, no mention is made of the sprinkling of blood on Aaron and his sons, but only of the washing with water and the anointing as preparatory to their performing priestly duties in the tabernacle; yet in Ex. xxix. 20, 21, the sprinkling of blood on them, when set apart to the priesthood, was enjoined; and from Lev. viii. 24, 30, we learn that Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood as well as anointed with oil. It is altogether reasonable, then, that the two parts of the ceremony were performed in reference to the tabernacle, as well as to the priests, though the purpose of the epistle required only the mention of the use of blood. The knowledge of the fact that blood was sprinkled on the tabernacle and its utensils may have been preserved among the Hebrews by tradition from age to age, so that the original readers of the epistle at once acceded to the statement. Jo-

tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. ²² And al-

sephus, also, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, iii. 8, 6, records it as a historical fact that Moses consecrated "the tabernacle and the vessels thereto belonging, both with oil . . . and with the blood of bulls and of rams." — || *The vessels of the ministry*; the utensils which were required for the ministrations in the tabernacle.

²² *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood.* The requisition for blood in cases demanding ceremonial purification was almost universal. In some cases, the use of water was sufficient, Ex. xix. 10; Lev. xv. 5-13, 17; xvi. 26, 28; and in some the use of fire and of water was enjoined. Num. xxxi. 22-24. But in *almost all* cases, the blood of some animal was required for making both persons and things ceremonially pure, as signifying, both in regard to persons and to things, that guilt, real and ascribed, had been contracted which needed expiation, and that God now looked on them with favor, reconciliation having been effected. Compare Lev. xvi. 16, 18, 20. *Persons* were required to be, or to become, ceremonially pure, so that they might be regarded as fit to associate with the people and participate in their privileges and services; and *things*, that they might be regarded as fit to be used, both on the ordinary occasions of life and in the sacred service. || *And without shedding of blood is no remission*; that is, remission, or *forgiveness of sins* in the Jewish ceremonial sense, forgiveness of violations of the Mosaic law, or of failures to obey its requisitions. This declaration, as connected with the preceding clause, has reference to the Mosaic statutes which regulated the Jewish community, and does not imply that the blood-shedding required by the Law could procure forgiveness, spiritually speaking, a forgiveness suited to genuine penitence towards God and connected with eternal life. Indeed, it is a main point in this part of the epistle that the Mosaic sacrifices could not thus take away sin, and that the death of Christ was requisite for that purpose. Yet the shedding of blood

in the Mosaic sacrifices was a constant inculcation of the great principle that an expiatory sacrifice was required for taking away the guilt which the holy law of God, binding on men universally, has connected with sin. — The Jews had been separated from all other people and brought into a special relation to God, so that they became, in a national sense, the people of God, a holy people. Standing in this outward relation to God, he furnished them, as their special Ruler, through Moses, a system of legislation, having its appropriate recompenses; when precepts, or laws, were violated, the person forfeited the favor of God, the Ruler of the nation, and his standing in the community of God's people, and was debarred from their privileges; or when, through any circumstances, he had become defiled in view of the Law, and therefore unfit to be continued in favor with God and to be associating with the people, lest he should communicate defilement to others, he was for a time debarred the usual privileges, and was required to observe certain ceremonial regulations relative to his case. Thus, temporal penalties were affixed to transgressions and delinquencies; and, when the prescribed ceremonies for purification had been observed, he was restored to his position. In all cases of pardonable offence, pardon and restoration to the community were granted in connection with the sacrificing of animals and with prescribed rites of purification, as indicating the ill-desert of the offender and vindicating the honor and purity of the legal system under which the nation was placed by Jehovah as its Sovereign. The entire Mosaic economy was doubtless designed to foreshadow the Christian dispensation, under which forgiveness of sins, as in the sight of God, and the purification of the soul from their defilement, were to be bestowed on the truly penitent through the sacrifice of Christ. If, indeed, a person had a true sense of sin as committed against God, and were heartily penitent for it, as doubtless was the case in many instances, he

most all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

²³ *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heav-

would of course receive forgiveness beyond that provided for in the Mosaic law; but it would not be bestowed through *the virtue* of the Mosaic sacrifices and ceremonies: a remission of offences against that Law, procured through the appointed observances, did not carry with it forgiveness of offences as committed against God, the universal Ruler. Thus the Jewish economy had reference to externals; it was fleshly, outward; and though it gave a vast amount of instruction, and amply revealed the pardoning mercy of God, and led many to true piety, yet it was mainly external, and preparatory, by its emblems and shadows, to a corresponding spiritual dispensation, that of Jesus Christ, designed for the human race at large, and disclosing the true method of the forgiveness of sins, as against God, and of a sinner's becoming fit to have a place, on earth and in heaven, among the inwardly holy people of God. The Mosaic system of sacrifices and purifications was admirably fitted to prepare a reflecting Jew to receive the great truth that "it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Compare Is. liii. 8-11; 1 Pet. i. 18-22; ii. 24.

23. While, then, both the old covenant and the new required death as necessary to their ratification, the necessity in the case of the old covenant was fully met by the sacrificing of animals, since it was only an earthly sanctuary, the faint copy of the heavenly, whose privileges were to be secured by this covenant; but in the case of the new covenant, as it was the heavenly sanctuary whose privileges were to be secured, a sacrifice more noble and precious was required. — *It was therefore necessary*, etc. The necessity here affirmed arises from what has already been maintained in

verses 16 and 17, namely, that such covenants as are here the subjects of treatment require death as the basis of their confirmation. || *That the patterns of things in the heavens.* The word *patterns* does not well represent the original term, which is here significant, not of *models*, but of *copies*, or representations. The Mosaic tabernacle is meant, viewed as a counterpart, or *copy*, of the tabernacle in heaven, the structure presented to the mind of Moses, according to the view given in viii. 2. *Things in the heavens*; the heavenly tabernacle. || *Should be purified.* A proper apprehension of the idea intended by this expression may be obtained by considering the directions given in Lev. xvi. 16, 18-20. From these verses it appears that on the annual day of atonement for the nation certain rites indicative of reconciliation and of purification were performed in reference to the *holy place*, the *tabernacle*, and the *altar*, as well as certain rites in reference to the people themselves. The high-priest was by these rites to "make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." He was to "go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it;" he was to "sprinkle the blood upon it, and cleanse it and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel," and was to "reconcile the holy place." In addition to this passage, it is important to consider the statement in Lev. viii. 15, 19, 24, of acts in connection with the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Moses is there said to have taken the blood of a sacrificed bullock and with it to have *purified the altar and sanctified it.* — The Jewish

only things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven

tabernacle and all its appurtenances were regarded as contracting impurity by the presence and contact of the worshippers, who were sinners and, more or less, in a state of ceremonial defilement, and who, of course, communicated their defilement to everything with which they came into connection; purification was, therefore, necessary for the tabernacle and its furniture. — The tabernacle was also, emblematically, the abode of God; and, therefore, whatever defilement it should have contracted by the presence and contact of the worshippers must be cleansed away, and a state of purity be maintained becoming the reverence due to the infinitely Holy One who condescended to make it his earthly dwelling. Also, as being resorted to by sinful men, from whom it contracted defilement, it was regarded with displeasure on the part of God; consequently, reconciliation must be effected in reference to it, or, which is the same thing, atonement must be made for it. The same may be said of the altar and all things pertaining to the tabernacle. — Moreover, a defiled thing was not legally in a condition to be used by the Jews; even the tabernacle, then, must be purified in order to be made suitable for them to resort to for the service of God, and in order for them to partake of the privileges and blessings connected with it. The several ideas, thus presented, are contained in the word *purified* as applied to the earthly tabernacle. Access to this, which was so important and desirable, required legal purity not only in the persons but also in the tabernacle itself. — || *With these; by means of these sacrificed animals.* || *But the heavenly things themselves;* that is, the heavenly tabernacle; the heavenly sanctuary, as mentally conceived of; in other words, heaven itself. — The *heavenly things* did not, indeed, need to be *purified*, as if they had become defiled; but as the earthly copy of the heavenly tabernacle was, by purifica-

tion, *made accessible*, so this indirect sense of the word *purified* was applicable to the heavenly; that is, the heavenly tabernacle was *made accessible* to us, we obtain access to the heavenly and participate in its blessings. || *With better sacrifices than these.* The plural number is here used, not with any special significance, but in a general and colloquial sense as suggested by the many and repeated sacrifices relative to the earthly tabernacle and its service. The main idea is contained in the word *better*. The one sacrifice of Christ himself is here intended, by the efficacy of which we obtain access to God and access to heaven, just as by the inferior sacrifices access was obtained to the earthly sanctuary and to God who manifested himself there. Christ's sacrifice was inconceivably superior to those of animals, in consequence of his personal excellence and dignity and its consequent efficacy. Compare verses 13 and 14.

²⁴. *For Christ is not entered, etc.* The necessity for a more excellent sacrifice than that of animals in order to procure for us access to the heavenly sanctuary, is fully met by the offering which Christ has presented; *for* not into the earthly holy of holies built by human hands, which was only the representation, or resemblance, of the heavenly, did Christ enter, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God in our behalf. The sacrifice of himself was requisite, that access to the true holy of holies, the heavenly abode of God, might be granted to us; with his own sacrificial blood he entered, and it avails. || *Into the holy places.* The original term is significant of the holy of holies, or the most holy apartment. || *Made with hands;* erected by men's hands, as was the most holy apartment of the Jewish tabernacle. || *Figures of the true;* mere correspondences, or likenesses, of the true. The most holy apartment in the earthly tabernacle was but a figure of the heavenly holy of holies.

itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. ²⁵ Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; ²⁶ for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

See note on the word *patterns* in verse 23. The earthly holy of holies in the Jewish tabernacle, in which apartment the LORD specially manifested himself, was an emblem of the true abode of God; that is, of heaven.—As the Jewish high-priest appeared, on the annual day of atonement, in the most holy apartment of the tabernacle, with the blood of a sacrifice, to procure forgiveness and divine favor for the nation, so Christ entered into heaven itself, in the very presence of God, with the blood of his more excellent sacrifice in behalf of his followers.

25. *Nor yet that he should often offer himself*; more correctly, *But not that he should often offer himself*. An additional contrast is here presented. It had just been stated that Christ entered not into the *earthly* most holy place, but, in contrast with the Jewish high-priest, into heaven itself; it is now declared, in further contrast, that Christ entered into heaven, not that he might come back and then again offer himself and again enter in, and thus might often, time after time, offer up himself and repeatedly present his sacrificial blood, as the Jewish high-priest entered the earthly holy of holies year by year *with blood of others*; that is, with blood not his own, but of the sacrificed animals.

26. *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world*; for, were it otherwise, were it necessary for him to repeat this offering, then, since access to the heavenly sanctuary could be procured only through the offering of his blood, it would have been necessary for him to have suffered death frequently since the foundation of the world. This, however, would be contrary to the appointment of God respecting death, namely, that man is to die but once;

an appointment applicable to Christ, inasmuch as he was “made like unto his brethren,” ii. 17; it would also be inconsistent with the inestimable value of Christ’s sacrificial death.—It is obviously the sentiment of this passage, that *forgiveness of sins* in the sight of God has its *ground* in the *death of Christ*; for why, otherwise, should that death be needed from the foundation of the world? The sins of the earliest of men required, for their forgiveness, this death, as well as the sins of the age when Christ actually suffered, and of succeeding ages. Compare verse 15.—In contrast with the appearing of the high-priest year after year in the holy of holies with the blood of a sacrificed animal for atonement, Christ has now, at the end of the Mosaic period, made his appearance *once for all time* in order to remove, to set aside, by his sacrifice, the condemnation of sin. || *Once*; that is, *once forever*. His offering did not need repetition; such was its inherent value, and such its acceptableness, it was adequate for the expiation of sin from the foundation of the world through all subsequent time. || *In the end of the world*. This was a Jewish phrase, signifying the end of the ante-Messianic period of time. The predicted coming of the Messiah was to end the *then existing world*, or order of things, and to introduce *the world to come*, or the new order of things. Compare the notes on i. 2; ii. 5; vi. 5. || *To put away sin*, etc. The design of Christ’s appearing among men was, to set sin aside, to annul its power, and to deliver men, through his expiatory sacrifice, from the condemnation and punishment due to it.

27, 28. As illustrating, by a parallel case, the idea that Christ’s sacrifice was not to be repeated, the divine ap-

²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ²⁸ so Christ was once offered

pointment of death to be *once* endured by men is produced. — Death is to be undergone but once; after that comes judgment, not repeated death; so Christ was to be offered but once, and when he appears a second time, he will come, not again to bear the load of sin, but to consummate the salvation of those who expectantly look for him. — *As it is appointed unto men once to die.* See Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

— *Once; once only.* || *And after this the judgment;* after this is judgment, a judicial decision concerning men. This judgment may mean the judicial decision formed at the close of a man's earthly career, the materials for such a decision being then completed; it may mean judgment at the last day, John v. 28, 29; Matt. xxv. 31-46; 2 Cor. v. 10, the interval between death and that judgment not needing, for the purpose of the statement, to be taken into account. The idea is, Death is to take place but once; it is not to be repeated, but after death men are to be judged, and the everlasting results of that judgment, vi. 2, are to be entered on. — The judgment here meant may be a favorable, or an unfavorable, one; this depends on the spiritual character and state of the persons judged; but whether favorable or unfavorable, men die but once in order to meet it. — The cases of persons, like Lazarus, raised from the dead and afterwards dying again, form no objection to this statement, since such cases were clearly miraculous and aside from the general appointment. — The mention, in the second member of the parallelism, of Christ's appearing for salvation, favors the application of the word judgment to the final judgment, since the day of judgment and the final recompenses of men are conjoined in the Scripture. The parallelism seems to be the following: Men's death and consequent judgment; Christ's being offered up and his subsequent appearing to consummate the salvation of his people. — It is obviously involved in

this passage that death closes the scene of human probation; judgment follows death, and the judgment is final. Compare John v. 28, 29; Matt. xxv. 46.

28. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;* so Christ was once, without the necessity, or the liability, of repetition, offered up to bear the sins of men and suffer in their stead, 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18, their sins being considered as laid on him, in correspondence with the idea that when an animal was sacrificed as a sin offering, the sins of the person concerned were emblematically, by laying his hand on the head of the animal, laid upon the animal, which was in consequence slain in his behalf. Lev. iv. 4, 15, 24, 29. This was in correspondence, also, with the representation that the sins of the Jewish people were, on the annual day of atonement, laid on the head of an appointed animal and were borne away by him. Lev. xvi. 21, 22. Compare John i. 29; Gal. iii. 13; Is. liii. 4-6, 12. In the expression, *sins of many*, reference is had to Is. liii. 12. And he bare the sins of many; the many being the vast multitude that will actually receive salvation through Christ. In some passages we read that Christ died for *all*, ii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 14; that he is the propitiation for the sins of the *whole world*, 1 John ii. 2; that God so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten Son that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The difference between the two representations is simply this: in some passages the *actual result* of the death of Christ in the redemption of *believers* is stated; in others, *the design* of the death of Christ is had in view, namely, *to provide for the forgiveness* of sins, so that no one might be lost for lack of provision, but that all, who will, may avail themselves of the provision and be saved. The *design* of Christ's death is as extensive as human sinfulness, inasmuch as it contemplates, not persons, but *principles* of the divine

to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

CHAPTER X.

¹ FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come,

government, relative to the salvation of sinners; as to its actual saving *result*, however, it embraces only those who have the spirit of his followers. || *And unto them that look for him*, etc.; to them that are waiting for him, expecting him, with confidence in his promises. Abiding confidence in Christ and expectation of his coming in due time to bestow the consummation of heavenly bliss are contained in the term here rendered *look*. The apostles and other early followers of Christ ardently cherished this confidence in him and expectation of his appearing a second time, — how soon was not revealed, — for consummating his redeeming work. See Rom. viii. 23; Phil. iii. 20. || *Without sin*; that is, as appears from the first clause of the verse, without *bearing* sin; not again to bear the sins of many and suffer in their behalf. || *Unto salvation*; for the purpose of consummating the salvation of his followers. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 14; 1 John iii. 2.

CHAPTER X. 1-18.

Further evidence of the all-sufficiency of Christ's *one* offering, and the consequent superiority of his ministration. — The Mosaic law, from its very design, being only an *adumbration*, a *foreshadowing*, of the good things to come, is necessarily inadequate to the actual procurement of those blessings; it cannot carry forward to perfect expiation and perfect bliss those who come year after year to its repeated sacrifices. These sacrifices, so far from imparting a sense of forgiveness and acceptance with God, renew the remembrance of sins; for it is impossible that the blood of mere animals should take away sins. Vs. 1-4. Hence, Christ came and offered up

himself; his offering, once forever, in accomplishment of God's will relative to our pardon and salvation, was acceptable and efficacious. Vs. 5-10.

The all-sufficiency of his offering appears, also, from the fact that, unlike the Levitical priests who are day after day occupied in offering up the same sacrifices which can never take away sins, Christ, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins, ascended to the right hand of God, awaiting the promised subjection of all things to himself; for his *one* offering is ever availing. Vs. 11-14. To the completeness of the expiation effected by it, the Holy Spirit, also, bears witness in the recorded promises of the new covenant. Vs. 15-18.

1. *For the law having a shadow of good things to come*. The necessity and efficacy of the death of Christ for redemption from sin had been insisted on in ix. 15-28. An additional proof of the inadequacy of the animal sacrifices to procure this redemption, and consequently of the necessity of the more excellent sacrifice of Christ, is now given. It is only the offering which Christ has once for all presented that can avail, since only that fulfils the will of God: the Law could not procure perfect expiation; *for* it had only a *shadow* of the good things which were to come, not a real, or perfect, representation of those things. It furnished only dim resemblances of the heavenly good things which were to be bestowed on the truly sanctified and accepted people of God. It served to cherish desire and expectation relative to spiritual and eternal good; but did not provide for and bestow that good, nor even give a clear representation of it. The *forgiveness* which it provided for was of offences against its own statutes; a forgiveness which

and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. ² For then would they

removed only the forfeiture of good standing in the Jewish community and restored a person to its advantages, but did not furnish a spiritual acceptance with God. The *purification* which it provided for was from external and ceremonial defilement; it did not remove the defilement of sin against God, nor the dread, which conscience would inspire, of future retribution. In like manner, the most sacred apartment of the tabernacle, in which God visibly manifested himself as ready to be reconciled, was but a faint resemblance of heaven, where God dwells in his holiness and grace, ready to welcome his children to the throne of mercy and to immortal bliss. — The Law, being thus only a system of shadows of the good things to come, can never, with its repetition year by year of the same sacrifices, furnish a complete expiation for those who come to its appointed services. Its nature and design did not embrace a complete expiation and spiritual acceptance with God; and it could not bestow benefits for which it was not designed. Its repeated sacrifices, adapted to a typical dispensation, could not procure the transcendent spiritual blessings which God had purposed to bestow. It only shadowed forth these blessings. — The *good things to come* are the blessings which were to be bestowed when the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4, should have arrived; namely, pardon of sin, access to God as reconciled to us, freedom from an accusing conscience and from dread of the just penalty of sin, deliverance from the defiling and enslaving power of sin, admission into heaven; in short, *eternal redemption*, as in ix. 12. || *Not the very image of the things.* As an image of an object is a well-defined and perfect representation of it, the difference here intended between a shadow and an image is that between a mere shadowy, dark, imperfect representation, and a clear, perfect representation. The Mosaic law furnished only a dim, poorly-de-

fined *shadow*; it could not give a well-wrought and complete *image*. The spiritual and eternal benefits which God designed for his true people were only dimly shadowed forth by the Law; it was reserved for Christ to disclose them with the clearness, fulness, and impressiveness which characterize a good image of an attractive object. — Compare 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us,” disciples of Christ, “by his Spirit.” — || *Can never with those sacrifices*, etc.; more properly, *with the same sacrifices*. The Mosaic law, being designed merely to foreshadow the future good, can never by the repetition, year by year, of the same sacrifices which the priests continually offer, make perfect those who come to the altar of sacrifice; that is, cannot make them perfect in respect to expiation, cannot secure for them completeness of pardon and a sense of reconciliation with God. It must still leave the sins of the worshippers without an adequate expiation; it must still leave the conscience burdened with a sense of guilt and with dread of a righteous punishment. The repetition of the sacrifices adds nothing to their efficacy; but rather shows their inherent inefficacy to procure spiritual and eternal good. — *Which they offered*; which the high-priests offered. — *Year by year*. Reference is had to the annual day of atonement for the nation, as prescribed in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. — *The comers thereunto* were the people in attendance on the occasion, observing the appointed rites, as performed by the priests, for purifying the nation and averting the displeasure of God their King. — *Can never make the comers thereunto perfect*. The idea here is the same as in ix. 9, “Sacrifices, that could not make the worshipper perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.”

not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. ³ But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again made of sins every year. ⁴ For *it is* not possible that the

2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered?* If those sacrifices could procure a perfect expiation, they would not need to be repeated, they would have ceased to be offered; so that the very repetition of the sacrifices shows their inadequacy to procure a perfect expiation. || *Because that the worshippers once purged,* etc.; because the worshippers, being once cleansed from the defilement of sin and freed from conscious guilt, would have had no longer a painful sense of being under the condemning and defiling power of their sins. If they had become really purified from sin and been brought into true reconciliation with God, they would have had an abiding sense of freedom from the defilement of sin and a sense of their acceptance with God. Their sins once fully pardoned would not have been brought up anew to their consciences as needing another sacrifice for repeated pardon; and the defilement of sin once really removed, they would not again have been so painfully conscious of moral pollution as to need a repeated sacrificial service for their cleansing. — The resemblance between the view suggested by this verse and that in the epistle to the Romans is obvious. In Romans, v. 1, 2, the apostle says, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom, also, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God;” and in vi. 2, 6, “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? . . . our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;” and in vi. 12–14, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it . . . for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;” likewise in viii. 1, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in

Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” So in 1 Cor. vi. 9–11, after mentioning many classes whose sins would debar them from the kingdom of God, he says, “And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” — Our Lord, also, said, in reference to the spiritual cleansing imparted to his disciples, “He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” John xiii. 10. — This deliverance from the conscious power of sin arises from the legitimate and designed tendency of the death of Christ as procuring pardon and holiness. When this tendency is counteracted by the various circumstances which may draw a disciple of Christ into sin, so that he becomes anew painfully conscious of his needing repeated pardon and deliverance from guilt, he must seek this, not from a new sacrifice in his behalf, but from a renewed application for mercy through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all; by virtue of the same sacrifice through which he first found peace with God.

3. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again,* etc. But, year by year, as the day of the annual atonement returns and the prescribed sacrifices are offered for the people, the painful consciousness of guilt in the sight of God is renewed. These sacrifices have not procured a sense of forgiveness and peace of conscience towards God. Every year renews the painful remembrance of sins and sense of condemnation; and even the external, ceremonial purification endures only for a year. The same routine of sacrifice and of temporary external absolution has to be repeated every year.

4. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.* The expression *to take away sins*

blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. ⁵ Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and

involves the thought that the sinner's liability to punishment is assumed by one who is not himself guilty, but who suffers in the room of the guilty, "the just for the unjust," 1 Pet. iii. 18; and it is thus *taken away* from the sinner himself. The essential idea of the phrase, then, is, *to procure pardon of sins*. The guilty person is thus released from deserved punishment through the sufferings of another, these sufferings answering all the purposes of law and justice in the case. This is represented to us by the figure of sins being removed from the transgressor and placed upon another, who takes them, suffers on account of them, and bears them away. See Is. liii. 4-6, 11, 12; John i. 29; 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18. Compare Lev. xvi. 21, 22. Though no one's *sins* and *ill-desert* can be actually taken by another, yet the *liability to a penalty* can be transferred, and as a result of such transference, which shall put transgression to the account of another, the transgressor may be released from deserved punishment; that is, may be pardoned. — The utter inefficacy of the ritual sacrifices to make expiation for sin and to relieve the conscience towards God results from the very nature of the case. Irrational and perishable animals cannot be an adequate substitute for men, so that men's guilt, or liability to condemnation and punishment, may be transferred to them, and the death of the animals be a sufficient manifestation of the evil nature and ill-desert of sin and a sufficient vindication of the government of God; the sacrificial death of mere animals cannot be an adequate counterpoise to the sins of men. The evil nature of sin could not in this way be adequately shown and sufficiently impressed either on human sinners or on holy beings who should observe the ways of God to men and be as anxious for the glory of God as for the welfare of men. — Irrational animals cannot take an intelligent and voluntary part in such a transaction; they are not responsible

agents, and have no consciousness either of guilt or of innocence, and no sense of the relation which a being sustains who stands in the place of a guilty party with the design of relieving him from his liability to suffering. The utter disparity, also, as to rational and spiritual nature, as to rank in the scale of being, and as to capability of good desert, shows it impossible that mere animals should bear and take away the sins of men; for no just proportion can be instituted in these respects between men and brutes; and the unintelligent, involuntary and merely physical sufferings of animals cannot be regarded as sufficient to avail for preventing the sufferings to which men have, by their sins, made themselves liable. A substitute must be, at least, of equal nature and rank with the being whose place he takes and whose liability he assumes. It seems, also, a natural demand that a substitute, in cases of offence against lawful authority, should sustain, both by his nature and his position, an intimate relation to the sovereign power which has been disregarded by the offenders: the nearer this relation, the more effectual the substitution.

5-7. *Wherefore*, etc. Since mere animals cannot take away sins, so that men may thereby be delivered from condemnation and stand in favor with God, Christ came in order to accomplish this end. — This design of Christ to take away sins, to make a complete expiation for them, by the offering up of himself, is now illustrated by a passage from the Old Testament which is singularly applicable to him. || *When he cometh into the world*. Christ coming into the world, setting out, as it were, on his mission of mercy, as sent by the Father, i. 6; John vii. 28, 29; viii. 16, 18, is represented as employing the language, here quoted, as expressive of the great purpose which actuated him. Whether or not, after he had fully entered on his work, he used these very words in application to himself, or whether the writer employs

offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: ⁶ in burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. ⁷ Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

⁸ Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; ⁹ then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away

them as strikingly significant of what Christ declared in all his teachings, in all his avowals of his purpose, and in all his acts, they furnish a comprehensive and affecting exhibition of our Lord's sentiments and design in coming into the world. They declare his design to do what God would accept as an expiation for sin, the Mosaic sacrifices not being acceptable for that end. || *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not.* The quotation here commencing is from Ps. xl. 6-8. || *But a body hast thou prepared me.* These words are not in the original psalm; but instead of them we there read, "Mine ears hast thou opened;" that is, Thou hast made me hear so as to understand; Thou hast taught me. The quotation in the epistle was taken, not from the original Hebrew, but, as are the quotations from the Old Testament generally in this epistle, from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, with which translation the writer of the epistle was familiar, as were also his readers. Since the passage is produced, not so much for *argument* from Scripture as for *illustrating* and *impressing* the point in hand, and as furnishing a striking coincidence between sacred writ and the acts of Christ, the design of the writer did not require a minute conformity to the original Hebrew.

7. *In the volume of the book.* These words refer to the manuscript rolls on which the various parts of the Scriptures were written. The modern form of books was not anciently in use. Hebrew manuscripts in sheet-form were rolled up around a wooden rod, which terminated in a knob, or head; and such a roll was sometimes designated, as is the case here in the original, by a word signifying a *small head*, but

translated *volume*. || *It is written of me.* From the point of time at which our Lord is here represented as using this language, namely, at his coming into the world, it is probable that the entire series of prophecies concerning him in the Old Testament is virtually here intended, not merely those found in the portion of the Old Testament written previously to the psalm from which this extract was made. This view harmonizes with our Lord's declaration in Luke xxiv. 44, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

8. The writer now gives a comment on the passage quoted, to show how exactly applicable it is to the point he is treating of, namely, the utter inefficiency of the Mosaic sacrifices to make such an expiation for sin as would be acceptable to God, and on the other hand the perfect acceptableness of the sacrifice of Christ as an expiatory offering. — *Above*; in the passage above quoted. || *Which are offered by the law*; which the Mosaic law required to be offered: a clause thrown in by the writer to make the application of the passage plain.

9. *Then said he, etc.* Having expressed his sentiment concerning the sacrifices prescribed by the Law, Christ then, in view of that sentiment, said, as indicating his abiding purpose, *I come to do thy will, O God.* I am come, in the body which thou hast prepared for me, to do what thou wilt accept. — By his coming into the world Christ has declared the unacceptableness of the legal sacrifices, and his readiness to make an effectual expiation by the offering up of himself according to the will of God. — || *He*

the first, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

¹¹ And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for

take away the first, that he may establish the second. Continuing the comment on the quoted passage, the writer says that Christ, as using this language, wholly sets aside the former part of the declaration, or the things first mentioned, namely, the appointments of the Mosaic law, in order that he may establish the second part of the declaration, namely, I come to do thy will; this will of God being, according to the 10th verse, that Christ should offer up HIMSELF as an expiatory sacrifice.

10. *By the which will;* by which will of God accomplished in Christ's laying down his life. || *We are sanctified;* we are redeemed from the condemnation and defilement of sin. Compare ii.

11. || *Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.* The body of Christ is here specially mentioned in order to maintain harmony with the quotation just employed, in which the expression occurs, *a body hast thou prepared me*. It is equivalent, however, to the person of Christ; that is, Christ himself. Compare ix. 12, 14, 25. Thus also in Is. liii. 10, the soul of Christ is mentioned as an offering for sin. — It is not particularly important to decide whether the passage above adduced from the Old Testament was primarily descriptive of Christ, and was originally intended to convey instruction respecting him as coming to do what the legal sacrifices could not effect. For it had come to be generally understood among the Jews that any passages in their Scriptures containing striking coincidences with the true doctrine concerning the Messiah, or with facts in the life of Christ, were applicable to him, and received their ultimate fulfilment in him. Such passages, accordingly, had much weight with a Jewish reader, and would be regarded, if not strictly as an argu-

ment from sacred writ, yet as a coincidence that was originally designed by the Holy Spirit, and therefore as partaking of the nature of a divine attestation.

11-18. As a final evidence of the superiority and efficacy of Christ's offering, and a proof that any other, or an additional, offering is needless, the fact is produced that Christ, having offered up himself and thus completed his work on earth, ascended to the right hand of God, henceforth awaiting the subjugation of his foes; his one offering being a perfect expiation for his followers. Vs. 11-14. — Of the completely availing efficacy of this expiation for them, the Holy Spirit also bears witness in the promise that God will write his laws in their hearts and no more remember their sins. With such forgiveness, no further offering for sin has place. Vs. 15-18.

11. The Levitical priests and Christ respectively are here contrasted as to their priestly work and their position, in confirmation of the sentiment that Christ's one offering is forever all-sufficient. — *Every priest;* that is, every Jewish priest. || *Standeth daily ministering,* etc.; continues day after day in his ministrations, offering up the same sacrifices, which from their very nature cannot *take away sin*, cannot relieve the guilty and procure pardon from God. See on verse 4. Every Jewish priest, while in office, is perpetually occupied in these ineffectual ministrations; he comes no nearer to God in behalf of the people, but simply goes through, day after day, the inefficacious routine of the same ceremonial observances.

12. *But this man,* etc. Christ, on the other hand, having offered up one sacrifice on account of sin, ascended to the right hand of God, for a permanent occupation of that seat of regal

sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³ from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. ¹⁵ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ¹⁶ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, ¹⁷ and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. ¹⁸ Now where remission of these *is, there is no more offering for sin.*

power, where he is Head over all things, Eph. i. 22, for securing the ultimate triumph of the cause which he had undertaken. Compare i. 3. His priestly position becomes henceforth associated with the regal; and by the power with which he is invested, Matt. xxviii. 18, he secures the full accomplishment of the designs of God's mercy and grace.—In accordance with this view is the triumphant language of Rom. viii. 34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!"

13. *From henceforth expecting*, etc.; henceforth awaiting the fulfilment of the promise that all opposition to his reign shall be overcome and universal dominion be accorded to him. See Psalm cx. 1, an address of the Lord to the Messiah, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." His *followers*, cordially owning his sway, shall enjoy its blessings; his *enemies*, unwilling to own his authority, shall be subjugated and be powerless for injury to his cause or his followers. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; Eph. i. 20-23; Phil. ii. 9-11.

14. *For by one offering he hath perfected forever*, etc.; he hath made perfect in regard to expiation and the consequent possession of heavenly bliss and glory. The efficacy of Christ's offering is complete; it secures acceptance forever with God and the perfect glory of heaven for those who are atoned for and cleansed from the defilement of sin. Hence, having offered his sacrifice, he ascended on high, there to carry forward to consummation the

designs of redeeming grace. || *Them that are sanctified*; them whose sins are expiated, and who are, consequently, redeemed from the condemnation and defilement of sin; in other words, the followers of Christ who, by virtue of his death, are redeemed from sin and its consequences. Compare verse 10. In accordance with this cheering view of the efficacy of Christ's one sacrifice, the apostle Paul, in Eph. i. 6, speaks of Christ as having *made us accepted* with God; and in Rom. viii. 30 he says, "Whom God called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

15-17. *The Holy Ghost also is a witness*. That this state of complete and enduring expiation is provided by the death of Christ, as ratifying the new covenant, is also testified by the Holy Spirit; for the Lord, after announcing a new covenant to be made, declares that he will write his laws on the hearts of his people, thus producing cordial conformity to his will, so that from the very bent of their hearts they will obey him; also, that so completely and finally will he forgive their sins that he may be said to remember them no more; he will dismiss them entirely from his mind.

18. *Now where remission of these is*, etc. Clearly, then, such a remission of sins being granted, no other and no additional sacrifice for sins can have place. The sacrifice of Christ is perfect and final. In him the *sacrificial system* is terminated.

The ultimate point in the argument of the epistle is now reached. Not only is Christ *superior* to the Levitical high-priests, and the Christian system

PART FIFTH.

CHAPTERS X., 19-39, XI., XII., XIII.

HORTATORY PASSAGES.

§ The hope in Jesus to be steadfastly maintained, x. 19-25. The consequences of turning away from Jesus in neglect of the grace proposed, x. 26-31. Patience in doing the will of God with faith in his declarations, x. 32-37. This faith indispensable, x. 38, 39. § Efficacy of faith in God, from its nature, and illustrated by examples, xi. 1-40. § Perseverance in the Christian course, xii. 1-3. Sufferings of believers God's paternal chastenings, xii. 4-11. Weak brethren to be encouraged; peace and holiness to be cherished; enticements to sinful gratifications to be avoided, xii. 12-17. Believers in Jesus not under a system of law, but of grace, xii. 18-24. The kingdom to which they belong endures forever, xii. 25-29. § Brotherly love; hospitality; remembrance of those in distress; the married state; contentment, xiii. 1-6. Remembrance of deceased spiritual guides; Jesus ever the same; his followers to be established in grace, not in the Jewish law, xiii. 7-16. Obedience to spiritual guides, xiii. 17. Prayer for himself solicited by the writer; special blessing implored for the Hebrews; their acceptance of the epistle requested; purpose to visit them; salutations, xiii. 18-25.

¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the

superior to that of Moses, but the Levitical priesthood is *abolished* and superseded by that of Christ; and to no other than Christ can we look as an availing high-priest; he has all the qualifications and has offered the sacrifice which an availing priesthood requires: the Jewish sacrifices were wholly inadequate to the purpose of pardon and salvation; the sacrifice of Christ, once offered and not to be repeated, is completely and forever availing for that purpose. — Not only is the Christian system *superior* to that of Moses, but it has *abolished* and superseded that, putting an end to all the Mosaic rites; and only by its provision can we obtain acceptance with God. — To forsake Christ, then, is to abandon the hope of heaven. Our safety consists in firmly adhering to him and cherishing faith in the promises of God through him. — To confirm the Hebrew believers in their attachment to Christ, which was so severely assailed, was, it will be remembered, the great practical design of the epistle. It is difficult to see how its original readers, having followed the thread of discourse to this point, could fail of satisfactory conviction and of strengthened determination to “hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.”

PART V.

CHAPS. X. 19-39, XI., XII., XIII.

EXHORTATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO A FAITHFUL MAINTENANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION.

CHAPTER X. 19-39.

Exhortation to an unwavering maintenance of the Christian hope, since the promises of God are sure; also to mutual love and good deeds; incitements to fidelity, since the coming of the Lord is at hand, and those who sin of choice after having received the knowledge of the truth can expect from God only judgment without mercy. Vs. 19-31.

19. *Having, therefore, brethren, boldness, etc.* Boldness here means the strong religious confidence with which we may come to God now that Jesus has presented his all-sufficient offering in our behalf. || *To enter into the holiest*; that is, into the heavenly holy of holies; the figure of a tabernacle in heaven being still retained, agreeably to viii. 2, as representing the abode of God, into whose presence we may now come, as worshippers and suppliants, with unfaltering confidence in his mercy. Compare ix. 8. Access into the earthly most holy apartment, where God specially manifested his presence on the mercy-seat, was granted only to the high-priest, and to him only on the

holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹ and *having* a high-priest over the house of God; ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-

day of annual atonement; now, however, in consequence of Christ's death, approach to God, with offerings of praise and prayer, is freely given to *every one*, at all times, who desires it.

20. *By a new and living way*; the way into the heavenly holy of holies; that is, the way to God himself, which is opened for us, so that we have free and full permission to go into his presence. This is *new*, as compared with the *old* method under the former covenant, which allowed no one but the high-priest to go into the presence of God: it is a *living* way, as ever-continuing and as conducting to eternal life. || *Which he hath consecrated for us*; which Jesus has dedicated for us by opening it himself and going up before us to the immediate presence of God. || *Through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*. A veil separated the most holy in the earthly tabernacle from the so-called holy apartment, the outer: the passage into the most holy apartment lay through that veil, and required it to be drawn aside, or to be removed. So, the way into the heavenly holy of holies, that is, into heaven, and into the immediate presence of God, for making supplication to him, was laid open by the removal of the flesh, the body, of Jesus; by his removal from earth; that is, by his death. As significant of this, we are informed, in Matt. xxvii. 51, that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom at the time of Christ's expiring on the cross. — A resemblance is thus noticed between the effect of drawing aside, or removing, the veil in the tabernacle, and the effect of the removal of Christ's body by his being offered up in sacrifice. — The 19th and 20th verses may be more exactly conformed to the original in the following manner: Having, then, brethren, confidence as to the entrance-way to the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, which way he dedicated for us, a new

and living way, through the veil, that is, his flesh.

21. *And having a high-priest*; literally, a *great priest*; which expression may mean either a high-priest, or a great, eminent, priest. || *Over the house of God*; over the household of God; the truly pious, regarded as a family over which Jesus, the Son of God, presides as High-priest. Compare iii. 6.

22. *Let us draw near with a true heart*; let us come to God in prayer with a sincere heart. Compare iv. 16; vii. 19. || *In full assurance of faith*; with fully assured confidence in the promise of eternal life through Christ. Compare vi. 11. The grounds for this unhesitating confidence, when we come to God with our supplications, are given in verses 20 and 21, namely, the sacrifice of Christ and his priestly work in heaven for us. On our part there must be a *true*, sincere, heart. || *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*. Allusion is here made to the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on persons who, ceremonially, needed and thereby received expiation, and were admitted to privileges and to offices among the Jews; as in the case of Aaron and his sons and in the case of lepers. See Ex. xxix. 21; Lev. viii. 30; xiv. 7. So we, believers in Jesus, have been sprinkled with his blood; in other words, our sins have been expiated by the blood, the death, of Jesus, and we are thereby delivered from the sense of unpardoned sin, from condemnation and punishment. || *From an evil conscience*; from a conscience which condemns us as being sinful, and which occasions habitual disquiet, a consciousness of guilt. — We have spiritual purification by means of the death of Christ. See ix. 14. || *And our bodies washed with pure water*. Allusion is here made to the bathing with water which was enjoined in the Mosaic ritual for legal purification, as in

science, and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; for he *is* faithful that promised; ²⁴ and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Lev. viii. 6; xiv. 8; xvi. 24; Num. xix. 19. Reference is also had to baptism, the Christian symbol of spiritual purification. Compare Acts xxii. 16, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Within, they had felt the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ; without, they had symbolically avowed this purification. — Thus both the *internal effect* of the death of Christ as procuring deliverance from sin, and the *external profession* of purification from its defilement, were brought to mind.

23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith*; properly, *the profession of the hope*; that is, the hope of eternal life through Christ. || *For he is faithful who hath promised*. God is faithful, whose promises gave us our hope.

24. *To provoke*, etc.; that is, in the primary sense of *provoke*, to call forth, to incite one another to mutual love and needful deeds of kindness.

25. *As the manner of some is*. It would seem that the worshipping assemblages of the Hebrew Christians had been neglected by some of them, probably through fear of persecution or through languor of religious affection. || *As ye see the day approaching*. The *day* here meant is probably the time referred to in ix. 28, when Christ will again appear for consummating the work of salvation. This time was regarded by the apostles and the earliest Christians as near at hand; hence we read in the 37th verse of the present chapter, Christ "will come and will not tarry." This is the same day, probably, as is meant in Rom. xiii. 11, 12, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; . . . the day is at hand." Compare James v. 7, 8. "Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord; . . . for the coming of the

Lord draweth nigh." — Our Lord had predicted his return for the destruction of Jerusalem, the ending of the world, and the final judgment. Matt. xxiv. 3; xxv. 31–46. He had, also, promised to come in order to receive his disciples to himself, John xiv. 3; in order to protect and comfort his disciples, John xiv. 18; and perhaps, in John xiv. 28, for each of these purposes. His predictions led his immediate followers to be in expectation of a certain day when he would come to judge the world and to establish thoroughly his kingdom. See 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. v. 2–4; 2 Pet. iii. 10–12. As Jesus made no disclosure concerning the time of his return to judge the world and terminate the present order of things, the apostles were left in ignorance of it. They appear to have expected a speedy return, and to have inculcated on their fellow-Christians a constant readiness for it. Since our Lord spoke with various significations of *his coming*, and sometimes meant his coming by *death* to remove his followers to his own abode, his *thus coming* would be, for all practical purposes, equivalent in their individual cases to his final coming: so that the manner of speaking which was occasioned by the expectation of his final coming was entirely applicable to the event of death as a providential ending of the present state to the person deceased. It was reserved for the developments of divine Providence to modify the expectation of a speedy final coming of Christ, since no revelation as to *the time* had been made to the apostles; while yet the substantial idea contained in that expectation remained unchanged, namely, the Lord will come; and for his coming we ought to be always

²⁶ For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and

ready, since we know neither the day nor the hour when he will appear. See Matt. xxiv. 42, 44, 50; xxv. 13.

26-31. While, on the one hand, the promises of God will be surely fulfilled to us, verse 23, if we adhere faithfully to Christ; on the other, if we indulge in sin after having received the truth respecting Christ, we shall incur a hopeless doom. Our case will, then, be hopeless, because the only availing sacrifice for sin has already been offered; no other remains; and since judgment without mitigation was awarded even to the violators of Moses' law, an unspeakably more awful judgment awaits those who reject the SON OF GOD.

26. *If we sin wilfully; willingly, with choice.*—The preceding verses had exhorted the Hebrews, since God would faithfully observe his promises, to steadfastness in their Christian profession and to mutual encouragement in view of the coming of the Lord. An additional ground for this exhortation is now presented, namely, should they of choice live in sin notwithstanding their knowledge of the true and only way of having favor with God, and thus practically disown that way, they would have no ground for the hope of mercy, since there could be no sacrifice for sin additional to, or besides, that of Christ. They would thus be virtually guilty of renouncing Christ as the Saviour, apostatizing from him as though he were unworthy of their confidence. Compare ii. 3; vi. 4-6. — There is, probably, throughout this passage, a recognition of a distinction similar to that made in the Mosaic law between sins of ignorance and sins of knowledge. See on v. 2. *|| After that we have received the knowledge of the truth; the truth* respecting Jesus as having by his death expiated our sins and procured salvation; *the truth* made known by the apostles and other preachers of the gospel, which truth Christians had professed to receive. *|| There remaineth no more sac-*

rifice for sins; there remains no longer a sacrifice for sins, and without a sacrifice there could not be expiation. The only availing sacrifice being rejected by such persons, no other can be offered for them, and this cannot be repeated. They set at naught the only method of pardon and salvation.—The case here presented is that of such as, notwithstanding their knowledge of the merciful provision, through the death of Christ, for pardon and salvation, choose to live in sin. By this choice they show a dislike of Christ and really set at naught his sacrifice. This case is, plainly, different from that of persons who are *overtaken in a fault*, Gal. vi. 1. The former class, as well as the latter, were found, at the time when the epistle was written, among professed followers of Christ; for at that time the acknowledgment of Christ, as the Saviour, was followed by becoming united to the company of avowed Christians, and bearing the name of Christ's followers. At the present time, inasmuch as the religion of Christ is acknowledged by the community generally in a Christian land to be the true religion, this class includes all, whether professed followers of Christ or not, who know the truth respecting Christ, but neglect the gospel, either abandoning a profession of it or refusing practically to acknowledge its claims to their acceptance. — This case is also not that of individual acts of sin, separately considered, which may be aside from the habitual bent of the person's heart, but of habitual departure from Christian principle and duty, indicating a heart opposed to the gospel as a system for pardon and recovery to righteousness.

27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, etc.* They must await the judgment of God and that burning indignation which will devour his enemies: a figurative mode of expressing the sure and dreadful doom of the adversaries of God. *|| Fiery indignation; more literally, heat of the fire which is*

fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. ²⁸ He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: ²⁹ of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I

about to eat up the adversaries. *Fire* and kindred terms are often used to express the wrath of God against the incorrigibly wicked. Compare xii. 29; Dent. xxxii. 22; Ps. ii. 12; xi. 6; Zeph. iii. 8; Matt. iii. 12; xxv. 41.

28. The certainty and terribleness of the divine indignation against those who turn away from Christ are illustrated by the certainty with which a conscious violation of the law of Moses was followed with threatened punishment. || *He that despised Moses' law*, etc. Any one, setting at naught the law of Moses, of purpose violating it, placed himself beyond the reach of pardon; on the testimony of two or three witnesses he was to be put to death. See Num. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xiii. 6-11; xvii. 2-7.

29. *Of how much sorer punishment*, etc. How much severer punishment will that man deserve who trampled under foot the Son of God with his gospel of grace, as contrasted with Moses and his Law! || *And hath counted the blood of the covenant*; and regarded the blood with which the new covenant, promising pardon and eternal life, was ratified, as *an unholy thing*; literally, as mere *common* blood, *not sacred*, having no expiatory power. || *Wherewith he was sanctified*; by which blood he has been separated from the evil world as avowedly consecrated to God, as redeemed from the defilement and condemnation of sin. It was by the blood of the covenant he was thus sanctified, since by his professed belief in Jesus, the shedding of whose blood ratified the covenant of grace, he became separated from the world and united to the people of God.—The word *sanctified* here, as in many places,

means *separated* to the service of God, *consecrated* to him, without necessarily involving the idea of personal holiness of heart. Compare the note on ii. 11. It was applicable to an entire congregation, or community, of professed followers of Christ as separated from the world, and as being a sacred company; and to individual members of it, as being by their union with it separated from the world for the service of God. This word and the related word *holy* were applicable, in Jewish use, not only to *persons*, but also to *things* which had been set apart from ordinary use to the divine service. Thus we read, in Ex. xix. 14, that Moses *sanctified* the people; in Num. xvi. 3, the whole people are called *holy*; in Lev. viii. 15, Moses *sanctified* the altar; in Ex. xxx. 25, we read of *holy* ointment.—In the case of persons thus set apart as belonging to God by profession and union with his people, the profession is of course taken for the reality, until facts determine otherwise. || *And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace*; and contemned the Holy Spirit, whose bestowal is a chief gift of God's grace, and to whose influence on the soul holy affections and fitness for heaven are to be traced.—The guilt of contemning the Holy Spirit, as well as the Son of God, and the merited doom of such contempt, what mind can estimate!

30. *For we know him that hath said*; we know who it is that said.—It is God, whose authority and mercy are contemned by those who thus turn away from Christ; and of his threatenings the fulfilment is sure. || *Vengeance is mine*, etc. See Deut. xxxii. 35. Compare Rom. xii. 19. He who thus spake in ancient times will vindicate

will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. ³¹ *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

³² But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; ³³ partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. ³⁴ For ye had com-

cate his authority and award the deserved retribution to those who slight his merciful provision for pardon and salvation. || *The Lord shall judge his people.* Deut. xxxii. 36; Ps. cxxxv. 14. In some connections this clause would signify, *The Lord will vindicate his people* by righteously taking their part, pronouncing a favorable judgment on them, however unrighteously men might treat them. Here, however, it signifies that God will sit in judgment on his own people and pronounce sentence against those who, professedly belonging to their number, yet disregard his will. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 17, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."

31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* of God, who ever lives to carry into effect his threatenings, as well as his promises.

32-39. Though the hazards to which the Hebrew Christians were exposed, and the wavering interest of some of them in the cause of Christ, made the preceding warning eminently necessary, yet the writer would by no means dispirit them. He therefore seeks to animate their Christian affections and to strengthen their confidence in Christ and in the promise of eternal life through him. He reminds them of former days when they had endured much suffering on account of their Christian profession, and had given substantial proofs of their sincerity by their deeds of kindness to imprisoned fellow-Christians, and by their cheerfully submitting to the plunder of their earthly goods through their assurance of a better possession awaiting them in heaven. This assurance he encourages by reminding them that a patient obedience to the will of God

must precede the fulfilment of his promises, and that the time for deliverance from sufferings is near. An abiding faith in the promises of God would keep their spiritual life ever fresh; but a declining from God would ensure his displeasure. He and his Hebrew brethren, he is confident, will not decline from their faith and perish, but will maintain faith in God and be saved. — || *But call to remembrance the former days;* remember the earlier period of your Christian profession. || *After ye were illuminated;* after ye had received the light of the gospel. — The unbelieving world, both Jews and Gentiles, were regarded as being in darkness; the disciples of Christ were in the light. Compare vi. 4. So, in Eph. i. 18, the Ephesians are said to have had "the eyes of their understanding enlightened," and in v. 8 they are said to have been "sometime darkness, but now light in the Lord." See, also, Col. i. 13; John viii. 12. — || *A great fight of afflictions;* many a severe conflict with sufferings.

33. *Ye were made a gazing-stock;* were made a spectacle of, were exposed to public scorn. — The term in the original is derived from an ancient practice of exposing and punishing criminals in the theatre, where a large and-promiscuous crowd would be spectators of their disgrace and sufferings. || *Ye became companions of them that were so used;* by your interest in the suffering disciples of Christ, and your readiness to take their part and minister to their necessities, ye became partners with them in the reproaches to which they were subjected, and exposed yourselves to the seizure of your property, as being also, like them, followers of Christ.

34. *For ye had compassion of me in*

passion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. ³⁵ Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. ³⁶ For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. ³⁷ For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. ³⁹ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

my bonds. The best editions of the Greek Testament present a word here which requires the translation, *For ye had compassion on the prisoners*; that is, on Christians who had been imprisoned for their religious profession. || *The spoiling of your goods*; the seizure of your possessions. || *Knowing in yourselves*; more correctly, *knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an enduring one.*

^{35.} *Cast not away, therefore, your confidence,* etc. Having, then, so long given such proof of attachment to Christ and of faith in the promise of eternal life, cast not away your confidence, which, if persisted in, will issue in an ample recompense.

^{36.} Adhere to this assured expectation of eternal blessings, decline not from it; *for ye have need of patience*; ye must patiently *persevere* in doing the will of God, if ye would receive the promised blessing; and the confident expectation of the blissful recompense will encourage persevering obedience. Compare vi. 11-15.

^{37.} *For yet a little while*; literally, *a very little while.* || *He that cometh,* etc. He that is coming, that is, Christ, the Lord, will come, and that speedily. The time for bestowing recompenses is very near. See on verse 25.

^{38.} *Now the just shall live by faith.* The righteous man shall live, spiritually, through faith: his faith in the promises of God shall be a spring of ever-renewed spiritual life and happiness; it shall secure to him divine fa-

vor. || *But if any man draw back*; literally, *and if he draw back*, that is, from God; if he cease to believe the declarations of God and decline from the way of obedience. || *My soul shall have no pleasure in him.* It is God who is here speaking. God will have no pleasure in the man who gives up faith in him, who ceases to confide in the divine declarations. — An *abiding* faith in God is essential to enjoying his favor. Compare iii. 14; John viii. 31, 32; Col. i. 23. — This verse and the preceding, with the exception of the first clause, are a quotation from Hab. ii. 3, 4, according to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. They are here applied to Christ as coming for judgment, and are confirmatory of the sentiment that faith in the promise of eternal life through Christ is indispensable to having favor with God. The passage might be thus rendered: He that is coming will come and will not delay; but the righteous man shall live by faith; and if he draw back, my soul will not have pleasure in him. — The idea may be thus expressed: When the Lord comes to judgment, the righteous man will be blessed in consequence of his faith in God; and if he draw back from God, He will have no pleasure in him.

^{39.} *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition,* etc.; we are not of those who draw back from God, declining to confide in his promises, and who will perish; but of those who abide in faith and who will be saved. — Thus associating himself with the Hebrew

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a

brethren, the writer aims to encourage them by expressing his conviction of the sincerity of their faith, while at the same time he affirms the certain destruction of those who cease to confide in the declarations of God, as well as the certain salvation of those who steadfastly maintain faith in him. — He thus prepares the way for illustrating the efficacy and inculcating the necessity of faith.

CHAPTER XI.

Since the soul's well-being flows from an abiding faith in the declarations of God, x. 37-39, the efficacy of such faith, particularly in times of trial, is next copiously illustrated, both for impressing the sentiment and for stimulating the Hebrews to an imitation of distinguished worthies of former days.

Faith, as presented in this chapter, is to be understood, agreeably to the closing verses of the preceding chapter, in the particular aspect of *confidence in the declarations of God*. This confidence it was important to urge on the Hebrew Christians, because if cherished by them it would confirm their adherence to Christ as the promised Redeemer, and add fresh efficacy to their expectation of heavenly bliss through him. The trials to which many of them were subjected, and the religious declension into which others had fallen, made it eminently necessary to revive and strengthen their faith and hope. To encourage faith in God's declarations, a copious array of examples of faith from the earliest times is here produced.

1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*; or, Faith is a *firm confidence* as to things hoped for, an *assured conviction* of things not seen. The original word here rendered *substance* is the same as is rendered in iii. 14 and in 2 Cor. xi. 17, *confidence*, and in 2 Cor. ix. 4, *confident boasting*. — The original word for

evidence means primarily *convincing proof*; and hence it signifies the *strong conviction* which results from adequate and sure reasons or arguments. — It was not the writer's purpose here to instruct the Hebrews as to the *nature* of faith; they needed no instruction on that point. Hence, he did not design to give a *logical definition* of faith, but to assert strongly and to inculcate impressively its *efficacious quality*. It gives *substance*, as it were, to things which as yet are only objects of *hope*, so that those things have the force of realities actually existing and within our grasp, and consequently they engage our affections and determine our purposes. It makes us apprehend things *not seen*, not yet possessed and enjoyed, Rom. viii. 24, 25, with a *conviction* of their reality, such as is produced by the strongest evidence. A person who cherishes faith concerning future things, relative to which God has made declarations, regards these things as *substantial realities*, like existing things around him; so that the things which he hopes for, on the testimony of God, are not, to his view, mere possibilities, mere supposable things, having no power over his affections and aims. He who has faith in God's declarations, — that is, who fully believesthem, — has a thorough *conviction* of future unseen things, just as he has of other things concerning which he has all necessary appropriate evidence. As from irrefragable arguments complete evidence arises and by them thorough conviction and confidence are produced, so God's testimony respecting the future is, to him who has faith in God, entire and controlling *evidence*. — It is not, then, faith as an *abstract principle* that is here treated of, but faith as *related to God's declarations*, and, more particularly, to his declarations concerning things future and unseen.

2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report*. The word *elders* here is not a

good report. ³ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are

term of office, but a respectful designation of the men of ancient times, the memory of whom was cherished with veneration. From the historical records in the word of God, their names had been handed down with distinction as of patterns of moral excellence; and the high estimation in which they stood was due to their *faith*; that is, to their firm *confidence* in the things which the promises of God had led them to hope for, and their deep *conviction* concerning things which they were not permitted to see, but which, on the testimony of God, they believed would, in due time, be actually present. They had received promises from God; and though they did not speedily see the fulfilment of these promises, though circumstances, sometimes, even appeared fatal to their fulfilment, they yet confided in the divine declarations; and through their steadfast expectation of the things promised, they lived in such a manner as to secure the testimony of their own age and of all succeeding time, to the uncommon worth of their characters. If they had not reposed faith in the promises of God pertaining both to this life and the life to come, they could not have attained the moral worth for which they were distinguished; they would have lacked the stimulus to patient continuance in well-doing. || *Obtained a good report*; obtained the favorable testimony which has been borne to their eminent goodness. The fact that the ancient worthies obtained the good testimony borne to them by being and abiding in faith is eminently an illustration of the statement in the first verse. That faith in God was a prime element in the characters of those ancient men is the current representation of the Scripture. But what was their faith in God? It was an unfailing *confidence* in the promises of God, so that they lived in hope of the blessings: it was a firm *conviction* that promised blessings, though not yet possessed and enjoyed, would, in due time, be bestowed.

It was not *present* good, but *future* promised good, on which their hearts were fixed. Of such faith Abraham is an instance, as appears from Rom. iv. 20, 21; and Abraham is a representative of the men who had faith in God. — The mention of the *elders*, or men of ancient times, here is general; in succeeding verses we have the detail of examples.

3. *By faith we understand, etc.* As the writer's purpose led him back to the earliest records in the word of God, the very first statement in the Bible furnished him an instance, not indeed of the exercise of faith, but of its necessity and value. Our knowledge of the creation of the universe by the word, that is, the uttered will, of God rests on faith in his declaration to that effect; for human speculation could never decide respecting the origin of the material universe. || *The worlds*; the heavens and the earth, the universe. || *Were framed*; were created and set in order. || *So that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*; so that the *visible* universe was not made of materials which were already existing, and which were objects of sight. — Allusion is here made to the ancient philosophical dogma which prevailed among men who knew not the revelation from God, that matter, as well as the Deity, was from eternity; that matter was not *created*, strictly speaking, but that it always existed; and that the work of the Deity in regard to the material universe was not that of a Creator, but of an Intelligence arranging and moulding matter, and bringing out of eternally pre-existing materials the earth and the heavens. Now it is to *faith* in the declaration of God that we are indebted for our freedom from the obscurities of human speculation, and for our understanding that at the beginning God actually *created* the heavens and the earth, that he brought them into *being* from non-existence. Gen. i. 1; Ps. viii. 3; xxxiii. 6. We understand from the divine testimony

seen were not made of things which do appear. ⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God

that the visible universe did not spring from already existing materials: it was an original product of God's creating power. This truth, familiar as it is to the youngest child in lands which enjoy divine revelation, and a starting-point to the intelligent and satisfactory contemplation of the universe, both for young and old, was, nevertheless, unknown to the ancient sages, since they relied on human wisdom, not on a declaration of God. It was the vast importance of this truth, doubtless, that made the writer, before commencing the detail of examples of faith, seize on it in this connection as an instance of the indispensableness of faith to men both as to their understandings and to their hearts.

§ *Examples of the efficacy of faith.*

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;* that is, a better sacrifice, one of more worth in the sight of God. See Gen. iv. 3-5. — As it was in consequence of his *faith*, that Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God and was of more worth than Cain's, it would seem, since faith is, in this epistle, a confiding in the declarations of God and acting according to them, that God had commanded the offering of an animal and had promised that his mercy should be bestowed in connection with such an offering. The offering up of the animal, therefore, in obedience to the command and in reliance on the promise, implied a confiding in the mercy of God and indicated faith in his declarations. How far any intimation of the *greater Sacrifice* was given to Abel, we know not; but as knowledge concerning the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head had been given to Abel's parents, it is certainly presumable that, from the beginning, the animal sacrifice stood in some intelligible relation to the true sacrifice on Calvary. At any rate, the *moral idea* connected with an animal sacrifice, namely, that the offerer deserved, on account of his sins, a doom similar to that which the

animal suffered, and that, therefore, he must place confidence, not in any personal worth of his own, but in the *mercy* of God, was easily apprehensible at the earliest times: and consequently this offering on the part of Abel may have been indicative of faith in God, or confidence in his merciful forgiveness. — Cain, on the other hand, declining to offer an animal, but regarding it sufficient to offer the fruits of the ground, instead of the animal, or, to the omission of the animal, showed a disregard of the divine will and a spirit, not of confidence in the divine mercy, but of dependence on his own offerings. The offering of the fruits of the ground also may have been required, as a thank-offering; but if made with the neglect of the *sin-offering*, penitence would not have been expressed, nor trust in the divine mercy for pardon; so that without the animal sacrifice, any other offering, however expressive and suitable for other purposes, would be materially defective as not indicating a right disposition towards God. Cain's offering of the fruits of his labor may seem a very suitable one and would, in other circumstances, be regarded as indicative of a grateful spirit; but the show of gratitude would be very questionable, if there were no manifestations of penitence and of regard for the known direction of God. — || *By which he obtained witness that he was righteous*, etc.; by means of which faith he was testified to as being a righteous man, God himself giving this testimony in view of the gifts which Abel offered, namely, the sacrifices of the firstlings of his flocks. This testimony is implied in Gen. iv. 4, where the Lord is said to have had respect to Abel and his offering. — The epithet *righteous* is given to Abel in Matt. xxiii. 35, and, virtually, in 1 John iii. 12. — Abel is here regarded as an instance of a man's being acceptable to God as righteous *by*, or *through*, *faith*, in distinction from being righteous and being

testifying of his gifts : and by it he being dead yet speaketh. ⁵ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him : for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please him* : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his

accepted of God through works of meritorious obedience. He offered his sacrifices with *faith* in the pardoning mercy of God, and was therefore justified in his sight. || *He being dead yet speaketh*. Abel, though so long since deceased, yet continues, as an example of faith in God and of its blissful recompense, to encourage and stimulate men to believe in God and obey him.

5. *Enoch was translated that he should not see death*. See Gen. v. 24, where it is said, *Enoch was not: for God took him*; instead of which words, the ancient Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, from which this epistle makes its quotations, reads, *He was not found; for God removed [translated] him*. Though the translation of Enoch to heaven, without suffering death, is not directly affirmed in the Hebrew original of Gen. v. 24, yet the peculiar mode of expression there employed is perfectly harmonious with the belief handed down among the Hebrews from age to age that Enoch was thus removed from the earth. — Compare the similar instance of Elijah the prophet in 2 Kgs. ii. 11. || *Before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God*. Reference seems here had to the fact that in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures the assertion that *Enoch pleased God* precedes the mention of his translation. That version presents Gen. v. 24 in the following manner: *And Enoch pleased God and was not found; for God translated him*. — The idea that Enoch was eminently pleasing to God is implied in the original Hebrew expression, *Enoch walked with God*; for a man who walks with God is sincerely and habit-

nally devout; and with such a man God is pleased.

6. *But without faith it is impossible to please him*, etc. The translation of Enoch is ascribed in the preceding verse to his *faith*; it is also recorded of him, that he pleased God; and this is taken as a proof that he had faith in God. For, a man who *comes to God* in acts of worship and in order to learn his will and seek his favor, so as to please him, must of course have *faith*; that is, must believe that there is a God, and that he blesses those who seek to do his will. Such a man has a practical *faith* in God. But if a man do not believe there is such a Being as God, he will not seek to please him. — The faith in the existence of God, who will reward such as seek to know and do his will, is of course not a mere intellectual apprehension of the truth that there is a God; for this may fail to affect the heart and regulate the life; but the faith here meant is a *practical belief* in God, which influences the soul to love and obey him. Such faith tends to make piety earnest and effective, to make its possessor walk with God on earth in preparation for the eternal enjoyment of his blessing in heaven.

7. *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet*. Noah was divinely warned of the deluge which God was about bringing on the world of the ungodly, 2 Pet. ii. 5, no signs of which had yet appeared, and which was not to come till after Noah could build the ark for the preservation of himself and his family. See Gen. vi. 12–14, 17. || *Moved with fear, prepared an ark*, etc.; having a pious

house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰ for he looked

fear of God which was grounded on a firm *belief* of his declarations, he obeyed the command to build an ark. Gen. vi. 22. Noah was a signal instance of faith and piety in a generation which was universally corrupt. See Gen. vi. 8, 9, 18; vii. 1. || *By the which he condemned the world.* By his faith in God's warnings and his obedience in preparing the means of deliverance from the deluge, Noah virtually declared that the inhabitants of the earth were grossly corrupt in the sight of God, Gen. vi. 11, 12, and were bringing on themselves a righteous condemnation. || *And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith;* and became a possessor of the righteousness which springs from faith and of the blessings connected with being justified and accepted of God through faith. Compare the note on verse 4. Noah believed God; this faith led to obedience in preparing the means of deliverance from the predicted doom, and to a reliance on the merciful intentions of God towards him and his household. The righteousness of Noah, which God so signally approved and connected with so great blessings, sprung from his faith: a resemblance is thus intimated between Noah, a righteous man of the early times, and the followers of Christ whose righteousness and acceptance with God proceed from faith. Rom. i. 16, 17; v. 1. The intimation is also given, that as Noah's deliverance was a result of his *faith* in God, so the Hebrew Christians were to expect salvation through an abiding faith in the promises of God by Jesus Christ.

8. *By faith Abraham when he was called to go—obeyed.* According to Gen. xii. 1, 4, 5, the Lord had said unto Abraham Get thee out of thy

country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. . . So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and he came into the land of Canaan. — Thus he went forth, not knowing whither his divine Guide would conduct him, but confiding in God and bent on implicitly following his direction.

9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, etc.* With unwavering faith in God, he went, agreeably to divine direction, into the promised land and sojourned there, as not having a fixed abode, but frequently changing his location, as if not in a country which he could call his own, but in a stranger's land. || *Dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob;* that is, in tents, as did also Isaac and Jacob. *To dwell in tents* and thus to be continually ready for changing the place of abode was significant of not having a settled habitation. The pastoral population in oriental countries, having their property in flocks and herds, and occupied in pasturage, removed from place to place as convenience or necessity required. Their habitations, consequently, were not stationary, but such as could be easily taken down and removed. To this class Abraham belonged; and though he went into the land which God had promised him, he had no fixed abode in it. He lived in tents, as also did Isaac his son and Jacob his grandson, who were sharers in the promise which he had received; for the promise respecting Canaan made to him had reference also and mainly to his posterity.

10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Abraham lived as a so-

for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹¹Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so *many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable.

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the prom-

journer in the very country which God had given to him and his posterity. His habitual temper of mind corresponded to his mode of life; *for* his expectations were directed not so much to an earthly abode, either for himself or for his posterity, as to the heavenly city, the permanent, eternal dwelling in heaven. He so understood the promises of God as to be looking forward to a city which hath foundations, the enduring city, called in xii. 22 the heavenly Jerusalem; the city which God himself fashioned and built, and which therefore was not liable to the vicissitudes of men's structures and cities. — The idea is thus strongly presented. Man's cities are but temporary: God's city, like himself, will stand forever. — The New Testament writers evidently understood the early promises of God to the patriarchs as looking far beyond the earthly possessions and blessings which are so distinctly mentioned in them. These promises were designed, doubtless, to give such a direction to their thoughts and desires as would comport with the far-reaching purposes of God towards them; and the yearnings of their spiritual nature would not be satisfied with merely temporal good. When God promised, as in Gen. xvii. 7, to be a God to Abraham and to his posterity, he included in this promise the spiritual and eternal good which would result from their being really his people, as well as the earthly and temporal good which would follow their being selected from all other nations to be externally and temporally his people; and those whose hearts were right with God enjoyed the full intent of the promise. The promise of the land of Canaan

may also be regarded as extending onward to the *heavenly land*; the desires and expectations of the pious patriarchs also looked forward, though but dimly as compared with believers in subsequent ages, to the future and eternal good, of which the present and temporary was but an emblem, or a foreshadowing.

11. *Through faith also Sarah herself received strength*, etc. See Gen. xviii. 10-14. It would seem that, though Sarah was at first unbelieving in regard to the promise, she afterwards believed it, through reflection, doubtless, on the power and faithfulness of God.

12. *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead*. Abraham is here meant, "who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations . . . and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, . . . but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom. iv. 18-21. || *So many as the stars of the sky*, etc. See Gen. xv. 5. "And the Lord brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Also, Gen. xxii. 17, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore." Compare xiii. 16; xvii. 6.

13. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off*, etc. As the promises, here spoken of, were given first to Abraham, it would seem that the persons here meant were Abraham and

ises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence

Sarah, Isaac and Jacob; though these might be considered as representing also the other ancient worthies who descended from Abraham, and who, like Isaac and Jacob, were sharers with him in the promises, and who lived and died in the full expectation of the promised blessings both for themselves and their posterity. These all lived year after year in faith and at length died in accordance with the faith which they had habitually cherished, not having received the promised blessings, but so assured, through faith in God, that the blessings would be bestowed, that they might be said, according to the idea in the first verse of this chapter, to *see* them in the distant future, and welcomed them as if almost within their embrace. — These promises related, in part, to events which were to take place many ages afterwards; as, for instance, the promise of a numerous posterity and the quiet possession of the land of Canaan by their descendants; also, blessings through their posterity on all the nations, specially through the Messiah, who was to descend from them according to natural lineage. See Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16. — Yet the patriarchs, confiding in the faithfulness of God to his promises, saw these events as certainties. In addition, the Lord had promised Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, to be a God to him and to his posterity: and the believing patriarchs died in faith relative to this part of the promise, having lived on earth as mere sojourners whose country, whose real home, was the heavenly one where God, their God, had his abode, and to which he would receive them. Their faith anticipated the enduring city in which they would at length find their home; they embraced this promise; they greeted the object of it during their life of sojourn, as a person long absent from his native land and

cherished home greets it as he deseries it in the distance. || *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* By their mode of life and temper of mind, they professed to have on earth no settled home, but to be mere sojourners. The land of Canaan, though theirs by divine gift, and to be occupied after the lapse of a long period by their descendants, Acts vii. 5, was not their *home*; they cherished the feeling that they had no home on earth, but fondly anticipated a home in heaven with *their God*. — The idea of being only a sojourner in Canaan found ready expression in Abraham, when contracting with the sons of Heth for a burial-place after the decease of his wife; Gen. xxiii. 4, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you:" also, in Jacob when he first met Pharaoh, king of Egypt; Gen. xlvii. 9, "The days of the years of my *pilgrimage* are an hundred and thirty years."

14. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.* Men who regard themselves as only strangers and pilgrims on the earth show clearly by this that they have not a home here, but that the country, or city, which they call their home is elsewhere; they have not yet arrived at it; they are longing for it as yet to be attained. Compare Col. iii. 2; Phil. iii. 20. — The religious yearnings of the pious patriarchs are, perhaps, illustrated in Gen. xlix. 18, where Jacob, while pronouncing blessings on his sons, seems to have paused awhile, and then to have given utterance to his faith and hope in the expressive language, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD." — || *A country*; properly, native country, or native city, regarded as a person's home.

15. *If they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, etc.* If they had borne in fond remembrance the land from which they came

they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹ accounting that God *was* able to raise

out, and had still clung to it with the home-feeling, they might easily have returned to it. — Abraham personally, in obedience to God's command, left his native country, with Sarah his wife and Lot his nephew. Gen. xii. 1, 5. The native land of Abraham would in common conversation be called the land of his more immediate descendants; so that they might be said, as well as he, to have come from it.

16. *But now they desire a better country*, etc. But, as the case really stands (speaking of it as if it were now present), so far from embracing any opportunity to return to the land which they had left, they are willing to forget it as a home, they are longing for a better land; that is, a heavenly land. And because they willingly forget their former earthly home, and have become intent on dwelling in the heavenly land, God is not ashamed of them, but is willing to acknowledge himself as *their* God, Gen. xvii. 7; Ex. iii. 6; Matt. xxii. 32; Luke xx. 37, and to receive them into the heavenly city in which he is, and in which it is appropriate that his people should have their home. || *For he hath prepared for them a city*. A clear proof of his favor towards them and his readiness to be known as *their* God is given in the fact that he made ready for them a city in which they might have their enduring, everlasting abode. Compare ver. 10.

17. *Abraham, when he was tried*, etc.; that is, when the LORD put to the test his faith and obedience by requiring him to offer up Isaac, agreeably to Gen. xxii. 1, 2. This requisition was indeed a close test of Abraham's faith in the promise of God, since the promise had reference to this very son, Gen.

xvii. 16, 19; xxi. 12, and it was through Isaac that the promised posterity was to descend. The requisition seemed to conflict directly and entirely with the promise. In these trying circumstances, would Abraham obey and continue to believe the promise? It was, in truth, a trying of his faith; and if he should bear the test, his faith must be strong indeed, and he might well be called the father of believers. Rom. iv. 17. || *He that had received the promises*, etc. Repeated promises had been made to him of a son and of an innumerable posterity. These promises he had accepted with joy, and he had entire confidence in their fulfilment; but now, after the promised son was born, and that, too, when, according to the course of nature, there was no ground for expecting his birth, the confiding father was required to offer up that son as a burnt-offering. || *His only-begotten son*. Isaac was so called as being the *only* promised son and the only son of Abraham and Sarah. How greatly this circumstance added to the trial of his faith!

18. *Of whom it was said*; more correctly, to whom it *was* spoken; that is, to Abraham. || *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*. See Gen. xxi. 12. The additional trying circumstance is here mentioned, of its having been distinctly declared to Abraham that through Isaac the numerous posterity was to descend.

19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead*; taking into account, or considering, that even from the dead God was able to raise him up, and believing that God would do so rather than allow his promise to fail. This only promised son, therefore, through whom he had

him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure. ²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning upon the top of his staff*. ²² By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months

been promised an innnumerable posterity, he laid on the altar of sacrifice, not indeed without seeing that the death of this son would, to human view, blast all his own cherished hopes and make void the promise of God, yet checking every doubt by considering that God could restore him to life and still carry into effect what he had promised. || *From whence also he received him, in a figure.* Figuratively, or in the way of similitude, Abraham may be said to have at first received Isaac from the dead. Compare verse 12; also, Rom. iv. 19.

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, etc.* See Gen. xxvii. 27-29, 39, 40. The benediction of Isaac on his two sons proceeded from his firm belief in the promises of God.

21. *Jacob, when he was a dying; or, as we say, when on his death-bed. || Blessed both the sons of Joseph.* The two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, born in Egypt before Jacob removed to that country, were adopted by Jacob as his own sons, Gen. xlviii. 5, and their names, consequently, were substituted, among the heads of the tribes in place of Joseph their father, and of Levi, whose descendants were not to have any landed inheritance, as being the priestly tribe. || *And worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff;* more exactly, he *bowed, in worship, on the top of his staff*. This circumstance seems added here to show the devout spirit in which the patriarch pronounced his benediction: he did it religiously, with unwavering faith in the promises of God. — The act here ascribed to Jacob is not found recorded in our English Bible; but the Greek version of the Hebrew original, in Gen. xlvii. 31, has the very words

here used. In our translation of the Hebrew Scriptures we there read, “And Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head.” The original Hebrew words admit of either translation, according as different vowel-points are attached to the word rendered *bed*.

22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing, etc.;* Joseph, when near to death, reminded his brethren that their descendants were to remove from Egypt to Canaan. His faith in the promises of God did not falter. See Gen. i. 24, “And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” Compare Gen. xv. 13, 14; xxvi. 3-5; xxviii. 13, 14. || *And gave commandment concerning his bones.* Joseph, through his faith in the promise that the Israelites should in future ages possess the land of Canaan, was unwilling that his remains should be deposited in Egypt. Hence he “took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” Gen. i. 25. They accordingly “embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.” Gen. i. 26. This oath was borne in mind age after age; and when, at length, the Israelites left Egypt, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, Ex. xiii. 19; and when the Israelites under Joshua obtained possession of Canaan, they buried them in Shechem. Josh. xxiv. 32. — Compare Gen. xlix. 29-31; i. 4-13, with reference to a similar direction by the patriarch Jacob.

23. *By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months, etc.* See Ex. ii. 2. The parents of Moses cher-

of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he

ished the belief that their nation, agreeably to the divine prediction, Gen. xv. 13-16, would be delivered from bondage in Egypt and possess the land of Canaan. A deliverer was to be raised up; and every true-hearted Hebrew parent might hope that a son of his was to be the honored one, and would cheerfully, with such a hope, incur many hazards. || *They saw he was a proper child*; a peculiarly fine-looking child. Ex. ii. 2; Acts vii. 20. His very appearance in the earliest infancy seemed to indicate an uncommonly honorable destiny. || *They were not afraid of the king's commandment*. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had "charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born [of the Hebrews] ye shall cast into the river." Ex. i. 22. The parents of Moses had no such fear of the king's decree as would induce them to consent to its execution. Their pious fear of God and their faith in him emboldened them to disregard it.

24. *Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*. According to Hebrew traditions preserved by Josephus, the Jewish historian, Antiquities, II. 9, 7, the daughter of Pharaoh adopted Moses as her son, in order that, should she have no son of her own, he might be the heir of the kingdom. In Ex. ii. 10, we are informed that Moses "became her son." But in after years, that is, "when he was full forty years old," his regard for his oppressed brethren, and his faith in the purpose of God to deliver them, led him to renounce the honor of belonging to the royal family. Ex. ii. 11, 15; Acts vii. 23-25.

25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy, etc.* He chose rather to share in the ill-treatment which his brethren were

enduring, than to possess the agreeable worldly condition which a compliance with the sinful institutions and practices of Egypt might have procured for him.—The Israelites were avowedly the people of Jehovah, the true God; they were his chosen nation; and it was among them that his spiritual people were found. By adhering to them, Moses was identifying his interests with those of God on earth. Had he been willing to disown his relation to the Hebrews and to the true God, and to accept rank and power among the idolatrous Egyptians, he might have secured the temporary enjoyment of great worldly distinction; but, through faith in the promises of God, he preferred to maintain his connection with the ill-treated Hebrews and to suffer his full share in their afflictions, knowing that enduring bliss and glory would be given to faithful servants of God.

26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*. The New Testament writers regarded Christ, the Messiah, as present, in his pre-existent nature, among the early Hebrews, directing their movements and controlling events relative to them. See 1 Cor. x. 4, 9. Whatever reproach, then, was cast on them, as a distinct people, was really cast on the Messiah, who was their Head. Moses accounted it a glory to share in such reproaches. The riches and dignities of Egypt were light in comparison with the honor of being united with Christ, even in suffering cruel maltreatment. || *For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward*. He contemplated the future retribution; on the one hand, the final recompense of a servant of God, faithful in the midst of reproaches; and, on the other, the final recompense of one who should

had respect unto the recompense of the reward. ²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. ²⁹ By faith

abandon the service of God in order to acquire the wealth and honor of distinguished rank in Egypt. The faith of Moses left him no room for hesitation.

27. *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.* This step appears to have been a personal one exclusively, and to have been taken previously to the instituting and first observance of the passover, verse 28, which took place in Egypt, on the night of the Israelites' departure. It was, therefore, his departure from Egypt when, after his slaying of the Egyptian, he fled from the face of Pharaoh, and went to the land of Midian. Ex. ii. 15. On that occasion the king had assumed a threatening attitude towards Moses; but at the final departure of the people from Egypt, the king and the Egyptians were desirous that they should depart and Moses had then no ground for an immediate dread of his wrath. Ex. xii. 31, 33. *Not fearing the wrath of the king.* Yet it is said in Ex. ii. 14, that *Moses feared*, because he had discovered that his killing of the Egyptian had become known. To avoid death at the hands of Pharaoh, Moses fled. He was, indeed, aware of his danger and took means to avert it. He did not, however, so fear the king's wrath as to be terrified by it and seek to conciliate the king's favor; he did not waver in his determination to share in the lot of his nation, nor give up the expectation of being their deliverer. According to Acts vii. 25, he understood that God would deliver his brethren by his hand; and the wrath of the king did not deter him from abiding faithful to God and to his brethren. He saw that a temporary absence from Egypt for avoiding the anger of the king then reigning, would be the only means of his becoming eventually the deliverer of

his people. || *He endured, as seeing him who is invisible.* He remained steadfast, as if actually seeing the invisible God, the true object of fear, the fear of whom elevated him above the fear of man, and to whom he held himself accountable, from whom only could also come needed aid for the deliverance of his brethren. According to Acts vii. 30, he remained forty years in the land of Midian before he was specially called by the Lord to return to Egypt for leading forth the Hebrews. During this long interim, he *endured* in faithfulness to God: his confidence in the ever-present God, who is ever mindful of his servants and ever watchful of their ways, never deserted him.

28. *Through faith he kept the passover, etc.*; more literally, *he instituted the passover*; that is, by divine direction. See Ex. xii. 1-28. Moses had faith in the declaration of God that he would, on an appointed night, as the last visitation on the Egyptians previous to the departure of the Hebrews, destroy all the first-born of the Egyptians, Ex. xi. 4, 5; xii. 12, 13, but would *pass over* the houses of the Hebrews on which the blood of the lambs required to be slain by them on that occasion should be sprinkled. Thus was instituted and commenced the festival which was hence denominated the *passover*. Ex. xii. 27. || *Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them*; that is, should touch the Hebrews. Moses had thus informed the people; Ex. xii. 23, "The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." See also Ex. xi. 7; xii. 12, 13.

29. *By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.* God had

they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. ³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought right-

promised the Hebrews deliverance from the Egyptians, who were in pursuit of them, and a passage through the sea on dry ground. Ex. xiv. 13-22. On this promise they relied: accordingly they passed through in safety. || *Which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.* The Egyptians ventured presumptuously into the sea in pursuit of the Hebrews, and God gave them up to their fool-hardiness, Ex. xiv. 17, and made the waters return, covering "the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh: there remained not so much as one of them." Ex. xiv. 28. They were all, in the expressive language of the original, *swallowed up*.

30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down*, etc. God had promised to Joshua that Jericho should fall into the hands of the Israelites, and had directed that the priests, bearing the ark of the Lord, and the armed men should march around the city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day: then the wall was to fall down. Confiding in the promise and obeying the direction, they thus came into possession of the city. Joshua vi. 1-20.

31. *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not*, etc. The spies who had been sent by Joshua to Jericho were protected by Rahab. Joshua ii. 1-21. In consequence of information which had reached Jericho concerning the Lord's wonderful deeds in behalf of the Israelites, she fully believed that he would give them the land of Canaan. Her belief of this rested on her faith in the true God; "for," she said, "the Lord, your God, he is God in heaven

above and in earth beneath." Joshua ii. 11. In consequence of her firm belief that Jericho and the whole country would fall into the hand of the Israelites, she solicited a promise from the spies that she and her relatives should be spared in the destruction which awaited the city: a promise, which was sacredly observed. Joshua ii. 12, 13, 18; vi. 22, 23, 25. || *Received the spies with peace*; with good will or welcome. — Though a disgraceful name had become associated with Rahab, yet, from the honorable mention which is made of her, we can have no doubt that she was, at the time spoken of, leading a virtuous life.

32-40. This list of worthies is now brought to a close by a rapid grouping together of names held in devout and honored remembrance, and of events indicative of strong faith on the part of the actors in them, from the time of the Judges to the period succeeding the termination of the Old Testament canon. — *Gideon*. Judges vi. 11, etc. || *Barak*. Judges iv. 6, etc. || *Samson*. Judges xiii. 24, etc. || *Jephthah*. Judges xi. 1, etc. || *David, Samuel*. 1 and 2 Samuel.

33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms*. Reference seems had here particularly to the victories of David. || *Wrought righteousness*. Since the men spoken of were occupied in civil affairs as well as sacred, it is probable that a righteous administration of public business is here intended; they administered righteously the offices to which they had been called. — A *religiously upright* mode of life in whatever capacity may also be intended as

cousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ and others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ³⁷ they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were

would appear from Ps. xv. 2; the expression, "He that walketh uprightly and *worketh righteousness*," being descriptive of the man in whom God delights; and from Acts x. 35, "He that feareth God and *worketh righteousness*" being the man who is accepted with God. || *Obtained promises*; obtained the fulfilment of promises. The promises of victories and of other distinguished blessings are probably here meant; such as in Judges iv. 14, the promise that the Lord would deliver Sisera into the hand of Barak; in Judges vii. 7, the promise that the Lord would deliver the Midianites into the hand of Gideon. || *Stopped the mouths of lions*; as in the case of Daniel. Dan. vi. 22.

34. *Quenched the violence of fire*; as in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Dan. iii. 27. || *Escaped the edge of the sword*. The various escapes of David may illustrate this. 1 Sam. xviii. 11; xix. 10, 12; xxi. 10; xxiii. 13. Also the escape of Elijah from the rage of Jezebel, 1 Kings, chapter 19th, and of Elisha from the king of Syria, 2 Kings vi. 8-23. || *Out of weakness were made strong*; as was Samson, Judges xv. 18, 19; xvi. 28; as was also Hezekiah. Is. xxxviii. 1-5. || *Waxed valiant in fight*; as at the capture of Ai, Joshua 8th chapter; at the capture of Gibeon, Joshua x. 1-14; as in the case of Gideon's band of three hundred men routing the hosts of Midian and Amalek. Judges vii. 19-22.

35. *Women received their dead, etc.*; as the widow at Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 17-24; and the Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 18-37. — Thus far the instances adduced illustrate the efficacy of faith in God as honored with deliv-

erance from perils and with other signal recompenses. But the efficacy of faith is equally seen in the support which it gives to suffering piety, in enabling its possessors to endure contempt, privation, the terrors of a violent death, without complaint and even cheerfully. Hence, specimens of this latter description are now added. || *Others were tortured*. Reference is had here to persecutions endured by faithful Jews in times subsequent to the Old Testament history, when the nation was under the oppression of heathen princes. — The original term here used is derived from the name of the instrument employed for torturing. It was called *tympanum*, and was shaped like a kettle-drum: the victim was fastened on it and either beaten, or scourged, to death. || *Not accepting deliverance*; literally, the deliverance, that which was promised by their persecutors in case they would abandon their religion. || *That they might obtain a better resurrection*. They remained steadfast and would not accept the temporary deliverance, preferring the better deliverance from death, namely, the resurrection to immortal life.

36. *Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings*. Reference is, probably, here also made to persecutions of which the Jewish history, subsequent to the times of the Old Testament, preserved some memorable instances. || *Of bonds and imprisonment*. Cases like that of Jeremiah the prophet, as related in Jer. xxxvii. 11-21, and of Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 26, 27, and others in other trying periods of Jewish history are here meant.

37. *They were stoned*; as was Zech

tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: ⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

ariah. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. || *Sawn asunder.* Jewish tradition relates that such was the fate of Isaiah the prophet. || *Slain with the sword.* Compare 1 Kings xix. 10, where Elijah speaks of the Lord's prophets slain with the sword; also Jer. xxvi. 20-23.

38. *Of whom the world was not worthy.* Though the men just spoken of appeared externally as objects of pity and scorn, they were yet the excellent of the earth; the world was not worthy to possess such treasures of moral worth. || *They wandered in deserts, etc.* Thus, in the days of Jezebel, who so bitterly hated the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah concealed a hundred prophets in caves. 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13. The prophet Elijah wandered about, having no security for his life. 1 Kings xix. 4, 8, 13. Jewish history records other cases of similar trying circumstances.

39. *These all; these, who are brought to view in this chapter as examples of faith.* || *Having obtained a good report, etc.; having obtained a good testimony among men through their faith in God.* Compare verse 2. || *Received not the promise;* that is, the fulfilment of the promise; they received not the promised blessing. — But what was the promised blessing here referred to? In iv. 1 and vi. 12, 17, the promise is that of the heavenly rest; and in ix. 15 it is that of the eternal inheritance. See also x. 36; xi. 13. In view of these passages, and from the general tenor of the practical views presented in this epistle, it would seem that the promise is that of the completed glory and bliss of heaven as connected with Christ's actual coming into the world and the establish-

ment of his kingdom by his becoming exalted to the right hand of God. The promise of an abode in heaven had been made to the pious in the early ages, but the realization of it in full measure, or in perfection, was not bestowed. The promise is substantially, that of the city which hath foundations, verse 10, and of the better land, verse 16; yet that promise is here to be understood, not in a general sense, since they had, in such a sense, received the fulfilment of it, but in its complete enjoyment, in its stage of perfection, which was reserved for the time of Christ's actually occupying the heavenly throne. All the promises of God made to the patriarchs and handed down to their posterity came to be regarded as concentrated in the coming of Christ into the world and his being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, which events would naturally carry to a higher degree the ineffable bliss and glory of the faithful people of God who had long before finished their earthly career. The ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father was the great event which would bring on the complete fulfilment of the promise; so that, comparatively speaking, the pious of former ages did not receive its fulfilment, but entered into the heavenly rest with the prospect of a still future complete realization of the promise, the commenced fulfilment of which had been bestowed.

40. *God having provided some better thing for us; or, God having looked forward to something better concerning us; something more excellent than had been bestowed on the pious of past ages, and which was held in reserve*

CHAPTER XII.

¹ WHEREFORE, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight,

until Christ should have accomplished his earthly work and been exalted to the throne of almighty power. This *better thing* is the more privileged state of knowledge and spiritual enjoyment granted to believers in Christ than that to which the Old Testament saints were admitted. They had merely a *shadow* of the good things to come, an obscure representation of them: we have the *image*, the clear representation of those things. Compare x. 1. The increased knowledge and enjoyment granted to believers in Christ, while yet on earth, in reference to the great sacrifice in their behalf, to their freeness of access to the throne of grace, their acceptance with God, as forgiven, as liberated from sin and adopted into his household, are a great advance on the measure of light and of divine favor accorded to the pious under the Old Testament. || *That they without us should not be made perfect*; or, should not be perfected. The *perfection* here meant is the perfected state of heavenly bliss which was held in reserve till Christ should have actually performed the work of redemption and ascended to his Father's throne as King of kings, Head over all things. Till then, the bliss of those who had been faithful to God in all preceding generations would be incomplete. || *Without us*; without having us in their company; us, believers who have lived since the coming and the ascension of Christ. The pious of preceding ages were not to attain their completely glorified state till we, of the Christian period, should be joined to their number. They were to await the coming of Christ on earth and his ascension to the right hand of God before they could enter on the perfection of their glory. The ransomed of past ages and the ransomed of the ages since the coming of Christ, being associated together, present a scene which could not exist till the great events of Christ's death and as-

cension had actually taken place. — The incompleteness of the happy state of the redeemed of past ages as compared with their state after the ascension of Christ and the addition of Christ's actual disciples to their number, may be illustrated by the descriptions of the heavenly worship and the bliss of the redeemed, as given in the book of Revelation. The mention of Christ occupies so important a place in these descriptions, Rev. v. 6-14; vii. 9-17; xii. 10; xiv. 1-5; xv. 3; xix. 7-16, that the blessed state of the departed righteous during the period preceding his appearing on earth and his ascension must have seemed, to one contemplating it after Christ's ascension, imperfect. In order to its being made perfect, the actual work of Christ and the presence in heaven of those who had actually tasted on earth of his redeeming grace were necessary. — Concerning the pious dead before the ascension of Christ we are sufficiently assured in the word of God that they were in a state of happiness, freed from sin and from the trials and toils of earth. But according to the view in this passage, and in harmony with the representations in the book of Revelation concerning the bliss of deceased followers of Christ, their condition was, to a great extent, one of expectancy, and the completion of Christ's work brought a vast accession to their bliss.

CHAPTER XII.

Incitements to perseverance in the Christian course, from the examples detailed in the preceding chapter; also from the view of Christ, the exemplar of believers, as well as their Lord; vs. 1-3; likewise, from the comparative mildness of the trials to which the Hebrew Christians had thus far been subjected, and from the design of God in the discipline to which he subjects his children; vs. 4-11. They ought, then, to encourage one another,

and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ²looking unto

and live in peace with all and in holiness; vs. 12-17; for the new covenant has brought them, not to Mount Sinai with its scenes of terror, but to Mount Zion, the heavenly city, with its scenes of glory and delight. The voice of God addressing them from heaven they ought, then, carefully to heed; for though the earth and the visible heaven are to pass away, the kingdom to which they belong will abide forever. vs. 18-29.

1. *Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, etc.*; wherefore, let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, run with patience the race set before us, as did they. The testimony which the pious worthies of former ages bear to the faithfulness of God, and to the efficacy of faith in him, is thus adduced as encouraging the Hebrew believers in their Christian course. They maintained faith in God and ran their race: let us also, stimulated by their example and their testimony to the faithfulness of God, run the race which lies before us. — The immense multitude of pious worthies who have finished their course is here conceived of as gathering around those who are now running the course, and as bearing witness to the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises, and to the efficacy of abiding faith in him, thus giving fresh courage to those now on the course, and stimulating them to emulate the example which has been set them. || *Let us lay aside every weight*; let us remove every impediment, as the racer divests himself of every superfluous garment and enters the contest without any incumbrance. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 24-27. Many of the cares and enjoyments of the present life, not sinful in themselves, may yet prove serious hindrances to an earnest pursuit for the heavenly prize, dead-weights to the spiritual racer. Compare Matt. xiii. 22. || *And the sin which doth so easily beset us*. The sin of unbelief, which so directly leads to

apostasy, see iii. 19; iv. 11, and against which this epistle so earnestly cautions its readers, may have been here particularly intended; while yet the inevitable tendency of sin in any of its forms would require the caution here given; for any sinful indulgence weakens the power of faith in the promises of God. This sin was constantly besetting the ancient Israelites, and overcame multitudes of them: circumstances often seemed adverse to the accomplishment of God's promises, so that their confidence in him was shaken, and through unbelief they could not enter into the heavenly rest. See iii. 19. The same danger met the disciples of Jesus here addressed: they were, besides, exposed to temptations and persecutions from their unconverted countrymen, and to various other drawbacks from a steadfast adherence to Christ. In common with all who begin to run well, Gal. v. 7, they were liable to languor of affection and of right purpose, making them an easy prey to unbelief. — While a particular form of sin may have been here had in view, yet such is the very nature of sin, as being opposition to God, and so constant are our liabilities to it, that it may well be universally described as that which easily besets and overcomes us unless we steadily resist its approaches. An avoidance of needless worldly complications, which may not be necessarily sinful, but may compose the *weight* against which we are here cautioned, will help us in avoiding what is positively sinful; and steadfast watchfulness against sin will make it comparatively easy to avoid such worldly embarrassments. Compare Rom. xii. 2. || *Let us run with patience*; let us through enduring patience run with persevering steadiness *the race that is set before us*. The idea of a race as practised in the Grecian games was in the writer's mind. This well represents the course of the Christian life, at the end of which a reward awaits the faithful. 2 Tim. iv. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against

2. *Looking unto Jesus*; looking off, from all hindrances, to Jesus, *the author and finisher of our faith*. In the original, it is not *our* faith, but *the* faith; that is, the faith in God's promises, such as was exemplified by the worthies mentioned in the eleventh chapter. The word for *author* is better expressed by *leader*, as in ii. 10, where the same word in reference to Jesus is translated *captain*. Jesus is the *Leader* of the faith, inasmuch as he has *led* the way in this faith, and leads forward the believing company, as its Head and as the illustrious Exemplar of faith in God; he is the *Finisher*, rather *Perfector*, of the faith, as he has, in his own person, carried it to perfection and entered on the perfect glory which was to be awarded to him, ii. 9; also, as he conducts to the perfection of heavenly dignity those who follow him in faith; v. 9; vii. 25. || *Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*; on account of the joy which he had, prospectively, of bringing many sons of God to glory, ii. 10, when, agreeably to Is. liii. 10-12, he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. || *Despising the shame*; making no account of the ignominy of crucifixion. The ignominy of crucifixion, as well as the suffering, was great indeed, since this was a punishment for the vilest and most abandoned criminals and for convicts from the lowest order of society. || *And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*. As a suitable and foreknown recompense for the suffering and humiliation to which Jesus willingly subjected himself, he is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God, sharing in supreme dignity and power. As necessary to his attaining this exalted state, he must endure the cross with its suf-

fering and ignominy: "the cross before the crown." Compare Phil. ii. 5-11, where the exaltation of Christ is represented as a recompense for his deep voluntary humiliation; also, Rev. iii. 21, "I overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." See also Is. liii. 10-12. — This recompense of glory is not presented here as *the motive* by which Christ was actuated, but as a suitable and promised appointment by the Father, in consideration of the humiliation to which Christ cheerfully submitted in order that, as his controlling object, he might redeem men from sin. x. 7; John x. 11, 15, 17. Being now exalted to the throne of God, he is an example of the recompense for an unswerving faith, for privation and suffering endured in the service of God, and is invested with divine power, so that he is able to succor his followers and deliver them from all the opposition of their foes. They may look to him, then, as their Lord as well as their Exemplar. The suffering and ignominy through which he passed had a glorious issue, ii. 10; so an abiding faith in God on our part, though it conduct us through perils and sufferings, will have a blissful issue as truly as did his.

3. *Consider him that endured such contradiction, etc.*; so great opposition both in word and in deed, far beyond what his followers are called to suffer. If Jesus endured such opposition, his followers must not expect to escape opposition. Compare Matt. x. 22, 24, 25. Since he overcame it, he will not fail to strengthen them, that they, too, may overcome. Having himself had experience of severe trials, he is able to succor his followers in their trials. ii. 18. Compare John xiv. 19.

4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood.*

sin. ⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶ for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chas-

As an additional ground of encouragement to perseverance, they are reminded that they had not been called to the extremity of suffering in the cause of Christ by any of their number being put to death. Agreeably to x. 32, 33, they had endured many sufferings and privations; but they had not been exposed to death for Christ. — *Unto blood* is significant of a violent death. The expression, perhaps, contains an allusion to instances of martyrdom in the earlier days of the gospel, such, for instance, as that of Stephen, Acts vii. 59, 60, and of the apostle James, Acts xii. 2. Persecution against those here addressed had not reached such a height. || *Striving against sin*; contending with those who would alienate them from Christ.

5, 6. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation.* The language in the original here is very strong, conveying a rebuke as well as reminding of a scriptural exhortation. It might well be rendered, *Ye have quite forgotten.* || *The exhortation.* Prov. iii. 11, 12. The quotation is made from the Greek translation, which differs somewhat in this passage from the present Hebrew text. || *Despise not — nor faint.* Two extremes are here mentioned, against which we are to guard when under suffering: we must neither *make light* of it, and thus fail to derive solid benefit from it, nor *sink* under it so as to desert the post of duty. We must rather regard it as a paternal chastening, designed and adapted to call forth filial reverence and obedience. Suffer-

ing, so far from indicating forgetfulness or unkindness on the part of God towards us, is really an indication of his paternal interest in our well-being.

7. *If ye endure chastening*, etc. If we are sons of God, his paternal discipline, since we shall certainly need it, must be expected, because God cares for us as a Father. Had we no experience of his paternal discipline, he would not be treating us as *sons*.

8. *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers*: whereof all genuine *sons* are partakers, as being objects of care and affection to their fathers. Specially all sons of God are partakers of chastisement, as being the acknowledged objects of his love and care. Chastisement has uniformly marked the treatment of God towards his sons on earth.

9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us*, etc. The duty of affectionate and reverential subjection to the afflictive allotments of God is further argued from the reverence with which in childhood we regarded our human parents from whom we received correction. Though they subjected us to discipline, we cherished for them filial reverence and heeded their chastisements; much more, then, to the Father of spirits, of spiritual natures, and, by consequence, of our spirits, ought we to subject ourselves, since, as a result of this subjection, we shall enjoy spiritual and eternal life. — In a similar manner, Jehovah is called, in Num. xvi. 22; xxvii. 16, “the God of the spirits of all flesh.”

tened us after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

¹² Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, lest

10. *For they verily for a few days chastened us*, etc. The argument from parental chastisement is strengthened by the consideration, that this chastisement, limited to a brief period, namely, that of early childhood, and productive of temporary effects, proceeded from the earthly fathers' sense of what might accord with the authority to which they were entitled as being fathers; they thought more of what was due to *themselves* than of the benefit which by chastisement they might confer on their sons. Their chastisements were inflicted, in many cases, even under gusts of passion, or in caprice, and to satisfy themselves rather than to profit their sons. God, on the contrary, is intent on *our profit*, on our being benefited by his chastisements. He has no self-will to gratify; no false dignity to maintain; no vengeful feelings to be appeased: but the ground on which he administers chastisement is *our good*; the result he wishes for is to be found in *us*, in our profit, in our participation of his holiness. He is seeking to deliver us from sin, to make us holy like himself and fit us to dwell with him in bliss, not for a few days, but forever.

11. *Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous*, etc. While the kind design of God in allotting our chastisements should make us submissive to them, it must yet be granted that chastisement is a cause of present grief, of grief while under the infliction, and therefore not a ground of immediate joy: by and by, however, its gracious intent will be manifested in the happy fruit of righteousness bestowed on them who have endured it. It will promote their righteousness in the sight of God, and will thus secure for them the blessings of right-

eousness. || *Peaceable fruit*; more correctly, *peaceful*, happy, fruit. || *Fruit of righteousness*; either righteousness itself as a fruit of God's paternal discipline; or the fruit, the recompense, which accompanies and follows true righteousness. — Sufferings are not to be regarded as, in themselves, blessings and grounds of joy: on the contrary, they are to be received as afflictions, and to be borne with patience and filial acquiescence, as coming from the hand of God for our good. Afterward, at a subsequent period, the results of affliction are suitable grounds for joy; and gratitude will naturally be felt towards God who chastened us for our profit. — Affliction, when it actually overtakes us, may find us unprepared, and may excite, at first, a tumult of emotion; but afterwards, when the first risings of sorrow are allayed and reflection is allowed space, a filial acquiescence may succeed, leading to settled peace and joy in God. Compare Rom. v. 3.

"The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

|| *Unto them which are exercised thereby*; to them who by the chastening are *trained up* to dutiful obedience and to the privileges of the sons of God.

12. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down*, etc. Since, then, it is God's method to train up his sons by chastisements, and his design in them is our profit, let the children of God encourage the faint-hearted among them, and seek to prevent them from faltering in the Christian course and turning out of it.

13. *Make straight paths for your feet*; straight and level paths, not crooked and uneven ones, in which a person might easily stumble and deviate from

that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. ¹⁴ Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any

the true course. || *Lest that which is lame*, etc; so that the lamed limb may not be turned aside from the true path, but may rather be healed and go forward with renewed vigor. — Reference is here had to those among the Hebrew Christians who were halting in their spiritual course, and who needed encouragement to prevent their falling away. The Christian body of which they were members were exhorted to strengthen them by pursuing undeviatingly the direct, straightforward, Christian course, and thus contribute to keep these enfeebled members in the path, so that at length, by their habitual prosecution of the course in company with the stronger, they might themselves attain to adequate spiritual strength. In this church of Christian Hebrews, as well as in other churches of the apostles' times, there were in all probability "doubtful disputations," Rom. xiv. 1, questions which ministered strife rather than godly edifying; 1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 23; Tit. i. 14; which tended to alienate members from one another, to weaken their interest in the Christian cause, and to make them a prey to the seductions of erroneous teachers and to the ordinary allurements of the world. All these hindrances and occasions of injury, it is here directed, should be avoided; and a tender regard be cherished for the well-being of such as needed establishment in their Christian faith. The avoidance of strife, the cultivation of mutual concord, condescension to one another, the cherishing of Christian affections and purposes, are included in the direction to make straight paths for their feet, since obstructions in the way of others would thus be removed, and even the faint-hearted and irresolute, if honest, would go from strength to strength.

14. From this verse the exhortation becomes more varied, and onward to the end of the epistle several diverse topics are introduced. Yet this verse

seems very intimately connected with the preceding, which in a metaphorical way enjoined the duty of cherishing an affectionate interest in the welfare of the vacillating. A spirit, kindred to this, of concord and accommodation, is now enjoined with reference to the whole body, and to all men: holiness is, also, specially mentioned. — *Follow peace with all men*; diligently strive for peace with all, make this an object of earnest effort. The word *men* is here supplied by the translators. The *pursuing* of peace, so active a duty, may relate particularly to *all* the members of the Christian body, as in Rom. xiv. 19, "Let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;" and in Eph. iv. 3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Yet the careful maintaining of peace among themselves would ensure its maintenance with all men, so far as a consistent regard to the distinctive principles of the Christian religion would allow. Compare Rom. xii. 18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Compare also 1 Thess. v. 13, 15, "Be at peace among yourselves." "Ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." Compare also 2 Cor. xiii. 11. || *Holiness*: purity of heart and life, in the sight of God and of man. || *Without which no man shall see the Lord*; shall be admitted into his presence and enjoy his favor. Compare 1 Cor. vi. 9–11; 1 Thess. v. 23; Rev. xxii. 14, 15. The expression, *to see the Lord*, arose from the practice of oriental kings, who lived very much in seclusion; so that to be permitted to see them was a distinguished favor.

15. *Lest any man fail of the grace of God*; lest any one of your number fail of attaining the favor of God and admission to the blissful state which he will bestow on the disciples of Christ; in other words, fail of salva-

root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled; ¹⁶ lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found

tion. || *Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you*, etc. A root of bitterness, according to Hebrew usage, is a root producing bitter and poisonous fruit. Deut. xxix. 18. Compare Amos vi. 12; Rev. viii. 11. It here signifies any source, or occasion, of corrupting influence by which the Christian body might become infected with evil and destructive principles.

16. *Profane person*; a person making light of sacred things. || *As Esau, who for one morsel of meat*; more properly, *for one meal*. See Gen. xxv. 29-34. Esau, returning faint from the field, saw his brother Jacob with a tempting meal of victuals. Jacob declined giving him anything to appease his hunger unless in exchange for it Esau would part with his birthright; to which Esau consented, with the light question, What profit shall this birthright do to me? thus contemning the inestimable privileges of the birthright of the first-born son. In oriental families, this birthright was invaluable: it secured to the eldest son the chief place of honor and power in the family, a participation in various respects of the father's rights, and a double portion of the inheritance. There was, also, a sacredness in this relation among those who knew the true God, since the first-born of men and of animals, and the first-fruits of the field, were held to be eminently the LORD'S, to be consecrated to him as peculiarly his. With this idea in view, the first-born was considered as the priest of the family: in the arrangements of the Mosaic economy, the whole tribe of Levi was separated for divine service in place of the first-born throughout the Hebrew nation. Num. iii. 12, 13, 41; viii. 16-18. — To disesteem the birthright, then, to sell it for any consideration, and particularly for one so totally out of proportion as that which swayed Esau,

would be a most criminal contempt of both human and divine things.

17. *For ye know how that afterward*, etc. See that no one of you resemble Esau in contemning the blessings and privileges to which you are invited; for, as in his case, the loss may be irreparable, and may be followed only by unavailing regret; for when, after having so lightly bartered away his birthright, he eagerly sought to recover for himself the blessing which had been pronounced on his brother, he was virtually kept rejected as being unworthy of the place and the privileges to which his priority of birth entitled him. In the providential arrangement of circumstances, he was set aside, as disapproved and rejected; the blessing had been already pronounced on Jacob, and it could not be recalled and transferred to Esau. See Gen. xxvii. 30-38. His rejection of the birthright had the appropriate retributory issue of his own rejection from its blessings. He may be said, also, to have been rejected by his father Isaac, who was the agent of effecting and sealing his rejection, while yet, as is evident from the narrative, Isaac acted ignorantly in pronouncing the blessing on Jacob and thus depriving Esau of it. || *For he found no place of repentance*, etc. The rejection was a fixed and final fact, not possible to be reversed, however deeply Esau regretted his folly and impiety in selling his birthright to Jacob, and however earnestly and sorrowfully he sought the recovery of his former position. He could not prevail on his father Isaac to *repent* of having given the preference to Jacob; that is, to *change his mind* and reverse the blessing. The *repentance*, the *change of mind*, which Esau sought, was not repentance on his own part towards God, a change in his own soul by which he might obtain forgiveness from God;

no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

¹⁸ For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: ²⁰ (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be

but a change in the mind of Isaac, his father, by which the blessing pronounced on Jacob might be revoked and be transferred to Esau: this he was unable to effect, though he sought it so earnestly and with so bitter lamentations. The sad consequences of his impiety he must inevitably meet. — *No place of repentance* is an expression similar in meaning to ours, *no room for repentance*; there was no way to procure it. — In Rom. xi. 29, also, the word *repentance*, used in reference to God, is significant of *change*; “The gifts and calling of God are *without repentance*,” that is, God will not change his purpose; it remains fixed, unalterable. — With this instance of the dreadful fate of Esau before them, the Hebrews were admonished not to treat lightly the privileges and blessings of the gospel; lest, in righteous retribution for their rejection of them, they should themselves be rejected beyond the possibility of recovering the favor of God.

18. *For*, etc. As encouraging the pursuit of holiness and the avoidance of whatever might diminish in their esteem the value of the blessings promised by Christ, the exalted glory and bliss to which the new covenant has introduced the followers of Jesus are now presented. The blissful condition into which they are brought is also heightened by contrast with the scenes of dread and terror which accompanied the introduction of the old covenant and the giving of the Law: a difference being thus indicated between the two covenants surpassingly in favor of the new, as a covenant displaying most attractively the mercy and loving-kindness of God. — || Ye are

not come, etc. As believers in Jesus, acknowledging him to be your Leader, and avowing obedience to him, ye have not come, like your forefathers, to a material mount terrible with the manifested presence of God; a mount in flames; not to thick darkness and a tempest, to the blast of a terror-striking trumpet, and to the sound of words so dreadful that the hearers could not bear it: not to such scenes has the new covenant brought you. || *The mount that might be touched*; not, which was permitted to be touched; but, which was capable, as a material, earthly mount, of being touched. Mount Sinai is meant, on which the terrible scenes occurred at the giving of the Law through Moses. A contrast was designed between this mountain, earthly, obvious to the bodily senses, and the spiritual mount soon to be mentioned. || *And that burned with fire*. See Ex. xix. 16, 18, “There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mount . . . And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.” Compare Ex. xx. 18; Deut. iv. 11; ix. 15.

19. *And the sound of a trumpet*. See Ex. xix. 16; Deut. iv. 12. || *They that heard entreated*, etc. Ex. xx. 18, 19, “And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

20. *If so much as a beast touch the mountain*, etc. Ex. xix. 12, 13.

stoned, or thrust through with a dart: ²¹ and so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake :) ²² but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven,

21. *Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* The declaration here ascribed to Moses is not found in the account of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. The nearest resemblance to it occurs in Deut. ix. 19, where Moses says, "I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you." These words, however, were not spoken at the time here mentioned, when the Ten Commandments were delivered, but subsequently, when Moses, descending from the mount, was shocked at the people's having made the golden calf. Probably, as this event occurred before the revelations to Moses on the mount were completed, it had become historically associated with the earlier events, and thus would naturally be recalled to a writer who was grouping together the terrible items connected with that mountain. This declaration of Moses very properly, also, belonged to a description of the terrible scenes through which he, as well as the people, passed on and around the mount.—To such scenes of terror, suited to awaken dread rather than hope, to repel rather than to attract, under which displays of the divine majesty and holiness the old covenant was established, the followers of Jesus under the new covenant have not come.

22. *But ye are come, etc.* But ye have come, by virtue of the new covenant, to the heavenly mount and city of God, to its countless throngs of holy and happy inhabitants, angels and glorified men, to God, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, whose sacrificial blood procures pardon and peace with God. || *Mount Sion.* Zion was the highest of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built, and is used in the New Testament for the entire city. Jerusalem was called the city of God because the worship

of the true God was there maintained, and he was considered as having his earthly abode there: on this account it was also called, as in Matt. v. 35, *the city of the great King.* It was consequently employed as an emblem of heaven, the residence of God; and hence heaven is denominated *the heavenly Jerusalem.* These several terms, Zion, city of God, heavenly Jerusalem, are here significant of *heaven*, conceived of as a *city*, as *the city of God*, he being eminently its maker and builder. xi. 10. Compare the 21st chapter of Revelation. || *The living God;* the true God, who has life in himself, independently, and who ever lives to bless his people. || *And to an innumerable company of angels.*—At this spot a difference in the punctuation appears in the more critical editions of the original. Of the several modes of punctuation, that which requires the following division of clauses is preferable:—*and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.*—*To an innumerable company;* literally, *to myriads;* that is, countless hosts: the heavenly multitude, composed of *angels* and of *the first-born*, the prospective residents of the heavenly city, being here, as a whole, spoken of.

23. *To the general assembly.* The original word here used refers more properly to *angels*, and represents them as joining in a grand festive gathering, as if assembled around the throne of God in joyful acclamations. Among the Greeks the word was applied to a gathering of the people for celebrating some public festival or solemnity; the games, for instance, or the public sacrifices. So here, the clause might be rendered, *To the joyous, or festive, gathering of angels.* || *And church of the first-born, etc.* The *first-born* which

and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ and to Jesus the mediator of the new cove-

are written in heaven are probably the sons of God who have been enrolled in the register of heaven, and who will ultimately be admitted into the heavenly city, as entitled to citizenship. They have citizenship in heaven, Phil. iii. 20, already by appointment and by anticipation; and are distinguished from among their fellow-men by this high privilege of adoption into the family of God. The entire company of the followers of Jesus on earth, both actual believers in him and yet in succeeding time to become such, is here contemplated as a *sacred congregation* in unison with the rejoicing angels. They are not only sons of God, but highly honored and privileged sons. Compare 1 John iii. 1, 2; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. To this great company of privileged sons of God who are to be citizens of heaven, whose names have been written in the heavenly register, believers in Jesus have come, as indeed forming a part of it; and the blessedness of having become adjoined to such an assembly, of sustaining such a relation to God and of enjoying such prospects, must not be lightly esteemed.—The expression *which are written in heaven*, as compared with similar language in the New Testament, seems to indicate the company referred to as being still on earth, though prospectively inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem. See Luke x. 20, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven;" Phil. iv. 3, "My fellow-laborers whose names are in the book of life;" also Rev. iii. 5, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."—The term *first-born* is not limited in Scripture-use to priority as to time of birth; but as the first-born son in an oriental family held a place of peculiar honor and privilege, the word became expressive of *dignity* and *honor*. Hence, the followers of Christ, being the regenerate sons of God and destined to exalted glory, are called *the first-born*. The application to the followers of Christ of terms indicating great dignity and

privilege we find exemplified also in 1 Pet. ii. 9, "Ye are a royal priesthood;" in Rev. i. 6, "Him . . . that hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Compare Rev. iii. 21. || *And to God, the Judge of all*. The presence of God in his capacity of universal and sovereign Judge not only imparts solemnity and grandeur to the scene depicted, but adds to the bliss of the heavenly myriads, since he is the righteous and merciful Judge. While he condemns the wicked and executes his judgments on them, he vindicates and acquits his faithful people and is a Father to them. Compare Ps. lxxii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8. || *And to the spirits of just men made perfect*. The *just*, more properly the *righteous*, who have been perfected, comprise the entire company of those who have been accepted as righteous in the sight of God, and admitted to the heavenly state; the pious of every age and nation, from "righteous Abel" (Matt. xxiii. 35) and downward, who have completed their earthly career and entered into glory.—*Made perfect* is here, as in other passages of this epistle, a peculiarly comprehensive expression, equivalent to the term *glorified*. It signifies both the *perfection of character* necessary for entrance into heaven, and the *perfect condition* to which the redeemed righteous are raised in heaven, now that Christ has ascended to his glorified state. See xi. 40.—In view of the statement that believers are come to the *spirits* of the glorified righteous, it is obvious that the spirits of the departed righteous are not in a state of sleep, or unconsciousness: they are still consciously living, active and happy spirits, with whom we, believers in Jesus on earth, are to be personally united as we are now united to them in purpose and affection and by our common union to our ever-living Saviour.

24. *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*; and to the mediator himself of the new covenant, Jesus; here presented to our view, not by his

nant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.

²⁵ See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that

official name, Christ, that is, the Messiah, but by his personal name, Jesus, and thus as occupying a more tender and affectionate relation to us, having our nature, though glorified, and welcoming us to intimate fellowship with himself. || *And to the blood of sprinkling*; the blood of Jesus shed for the ratification of the new covenant, and securing to us pardon and peace with God. As the blood of the ancient sacrifice was sprinkled, Num. xix. 2-22, on the people to procure for them ceremonial expiation, so, in a spiritual sense, the blood of Christ is sprinkled on the consciences of his disciples; that is, through him as having shed his blood in their behalf, an offering acceptable to God, they have here obtained pardon and peace with God, and in the heavenly city the blood of Jesus will ever be regarded with affectionate reverence as having procured cleansing from all sin. 1 John i. 7. || *Which speaketh better things than that of Abel*. The blood of Jesus shed for the remission of sins speaks for us in tones of mercy, and to us in compassionate and earnest invitation to heavenly bliss; while on the contrary the blood of Abel cried for vengeance on his murderer. Gen. iv. 10. — Such is the state to which we have come through faith in Jesus, and such the eternal blessings which the new covenant secures for us. Instead of Mount Sinai and the angels ministering in scenes of terror there, and instead of the awe-stricken company to which the old covenant, establishing the Mosaic dispensation, was addressed, we are by faith in Jesus come to Mount Zion, the celestial city, to the rejoicing angels, to the sons of God who are destined to heavenly citizenship, to the Judge of all, to the glorified spirits of righteous men, to the Mediator of the new covenant, and to his atoning, peace-speaking blood. — How powerful an

argument this to the Hebrews, to all who bear the Christian name, to follow after holiness, ver. 14, without which no man can see the Lord, and to estimate union with Christ and an interest in the covenant ratified by his blood as a boon beyond price, ver. 16, which no possible combination of circumstances should have power to make them barter away, or abandon!

²⁵. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. Having such assurances of pardoning mercy and of participation in the bliss of the heavenly city, see that ye decline not the calls of him who speaks to you in such mercy, inviting you to all the present and eternal blessings of the new covenant which his own blood has ratified. || *For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth*, etc. If they to whom Moses on earth delivered instructions from God, and who disobeyed him, did not escape the punishment due to their disobedience, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from him who now speaks to us from heaven. Compare ii. 2-4. This address to us from heaven comes from the Son of God, Jesus, now exalted on high, invested with all authority and power, and is pre-eminently a declaration, not of vengeance, but of the love and pardoning mercy of God, and, as appears from the succeeding verses, is the final communication to men. — But is it not said, Ex. xx. 22, in reference to the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, "Ye have seen that I have talked with you *from heaven*"? Also, Dent. iv. 36, "Out of *heaven* he made thee to hear his voice;" and Neh. ix. 13, "Thou earnest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them *from heaven*." — In these passages, however, the word *heaven* signifies the visible heaven from which God appeared to descend on Mount Sinai; not the heaven where God is conceived

*speake*th from heaven : ²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth : but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. ²⁷ And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Wherefore we receiving a

of as dwelling in glory and where Christ sits at his right hand.

26. *Whose voice then shook the earth.* The agency of Christ at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai is here implied, as in other passages his agency in transactions before his appearance on earth is brought to notice. See John xii. 41; Heb. i. 10; also on iii. 3. In Ex. xix. 18, we read that when the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in fire "the whole mount quaked greatly." In other passages, this same event is referred to as a shaking of the earth. Judges v. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 8; lxxvii. 18. Compare Ps. cxiv. 4-7. *|| But now he hath promised, saying, etc.* Sec IIag. ii. 6. He whose voice formerly shook the earth hath since that time and with reference to the present time, in view of the Messianic reign, the new and final dispensation, being entered on, promised that he will shake not only the earth, but also heaven. *Earth and heaven* include the visible creation, which is to undergo some great change at the consummation of the Messiah's reign, when he comes to judgment.—The language of the prophet, having reference apparently to the rebuilding of the temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and to the coming of the Messiah, is here applied to the progress of the Messiah's reign and its consummation at the end of the world.

27. *And this word, Yet once more;* that is, Now this expression, *Yet once more.* The precise point which the writer intends to present is contained in this expression; since it indicates that the predicted convulsion of the universe *yet remains* to be effected, and that *only once more* is such a convulsion to be experienced : *once more* and *once only*, as preliminary to the ever-abiding consummation of the Messiah's kingdom, the reign of righteousness

and the prevalence of holy bliss. All beyond this era is, so far as revelation teaches, unending retribution; of grace to the disciples of Jesus and of righteous doom to those who shall remain impenitent and unbelieving. *|| Signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken;* signifieth the removal, the passing away, or changing to some other form, of the things shaken; that is, the removal of the earth and heaven. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 7 : "The heavens and the earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men;" also, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. *|| As of things that are made;* as of things that have been made, not originally independent, and therefore mutable, material things, liable to be changed at whatever time and in whatever way and to whatever extent the Maker wills. *|| That those things which cannot be shaken may remain;* that things not belonging to the earth and the visible heavens, and therefore not liable to the changes which the earth and the heavens are destined to undergo, may abide undisturbed, established for perpetuity; that is, the kingdom of Christ, which is to endure forever. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 13 : "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Rev. xxi. 1.—In the 26th and 27th verses there is a contrast between the Mosaic dispensation and that of Christ, in reference to durability. As the visible earth and heaven are to experience a convulsion and to disappear, and are to be succeeded by the new heaven and new earth, so the Mosaic economy was designed to be only temporary and preparatory to the Christian dispensation, or the kingdom of Christ, which is to have no end.

kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

CHAPTER XIII.

¹ LET brotherly love continue. ² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels

28. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*, etc. Wherefore, being admitted to the blessings of an indestructible, everlasting kingdom, let us cherish gratitude to God, by which let us serve him acceptably with godly fear and awe. — The undecaying glory and bliss of the Messiah's kingdom is thus presented as an additional motive to steadfastness in the service of God. || *Let us have grace*. The idea in the original is, Let us be grateful to God; a state of mind dependent indeed on divine grace. — The spirit of gratitude and praise is acceptable to God, Ps. l. 23, and prompts to thorough and reverent obedience. The ground for gratitude, here presented, is the singularly blessed condition, now and hereafter, into which the subjects of the Messiah's reign are introduced.

29. *For our God is a consuming fire*; literally, For, also, our God is a consuming fire. A reason is here given for the reverence and awe which we ought to cherish towards God. His invitations and commands are not to be trifled with. He will render a most fearful retribution to those who slight his messages. His fiery indignation, x. 27, will consume them. — The expression *consuming fire* is derived from Deut. iv. 24, "For the Lord, thy God, is a consuming fire, a jealous God." — He will, as such, vindicate his holiness and his abused majesty by inflictions corresponding to the enormity of offences against him. God, under the new dispensation, as well as the old, must be served with reverence. He is unchangeable; he will ever render terrible recompense to them who despise the riches of his goodness and

forbearance and long suffering. Rom. ii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS AND CLOSING SALUTATIONS.

1. *Let brotherly love continue*. The Hebrews had already, in vi. 10, been commended for the love which they had shown to their Christian brethren. They are now exhorted to a continuance of this affectionate regard for one another, which would, besides being an act of obedience, happily regulate all the intercourse of life. Compare Rom. xii. 10.

2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers*; more literally, Forget not hospitality. Compare Rom. xii. 13; Tit. i. 8. The occasions for gratuitous hospitality in ancient times and in oriental countries were frequent. Persons of all descriptions, when away from home, were greatly dependent on it. Those early Christians who had occasion to travel from place to place were in the habit of seeking entertainment among their brethren, to whom they made themselves known both by reporting themselves as Christians, and by commendatory letters from their church-officers. The duty of hospitality included, also, the furnishing of facilities to travellers for prosecuting their journey. Tit. iii. 13; 3 John 6, 6. || *Some have entertained angels unawares*. Such was the case with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 2-8; and with Lot, Gen. xix. 1-3. The historian on both of these occasions seems to have known that the strangers were heavenly beings; but they had the aspect,

unawares. ³ Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

⁴ Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

⁵ *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* ⁶ So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper and, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

at first, to Abraham and Lot, of mere men.

3. *Remember them that are in bonds, etc.* Christian brethren, restrained of their liberty, particularly as imprisoned, on account of their religion, are here referred to: they were to be remembered with a sympathizing spirit by the Christians, as if enduring the same treatment, putting themselves, as it were, in their circumstances. || *Them which suffer adversity, etc.* Remember them, also, who are in distress, particularly through ill treatment, as being yourselves, likewise, in the body and therefore liable to similar trouble. — The duty of tender and active sympathy with distressed Christian brethren, on the ground of having the same nature with them and being therefore liable to similar sufferings, is evidently enjoined. Sympathy having such a ground will extend to the case of *any* persons in affliction, whether the affliction proceed, properly speaking, from divine Providence, or from oppression, or any ill treatment, by their fellow-men.

4. *Marriage is honorable in all, etc.* The connection in which this verse stands shows that it was not originally intended as a declaration, but as an exhortation. It would be better rendered, *Let marriage be in all respects honored*, held in sacred regard as an honorable state, not to be shunned nor abused; make not light of the marriage relation, but pay due honor to the will of God concerning it.

5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness.* Our present usage of the word *conversation* is more limited

than when the translation of the Bible was made. It was then equivalent to *manner of life, intercourse, deportment*. It therefore generally, in the English Scriptures, fails to express the idea of the original. The original word here corresponds well to our expression *turn of mind* as influencing the *course* of life. The exhortation, then, is, Let your disposition and conduct be free from covetousness; more particularly, as the original indicates, free from *love of money*. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 8-10. || *For he hath said; that is, God. || I will never leave thee, etc.* This assurance of divine aid occurs, almost in the same words, with reference to various occasions, in Deut. xxxi. 6; Joshua i. 5; and 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. The expression is highly intensive in the original, and might be translated, I will surely not leave thee; nor will I by any means forsake thee.

6. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, etc.* See Ps. cxviii. 6. Compare iv. 16, where we are encouraged to pray *boldly*; that is, with unflinching confidence in God.

7-16. The Hebrews are next reminded of their deceased spiritual guides, as examples of faith in God to the close of life. The way is thus prepared to enjoin on them the duty of an uncompromising avowal of themselves as followers of Christ, as being entirely distinct in their principles and spirit from the adherents to Judaism, as having come out from the Jewish community and arranged themselves under the leadership of Jesus.

⁷ Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation: ⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

⁹ Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with

7. *Remember them which have the rule over you; rather, them who had the rule over you.* — Reference is made to their former leaders in instruction, in worship and church-affairs, their spiritual guides, now deceased. The original expresses here not so much the idea of ruling as that of leading, guiding. || *Who have spoken unto you, etc.; literally, Who spake to you the word of God.* These men, probably, were personally known to the first readers of the epistle, and had reached the end of their course within a comparatively recent time. || *Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; whose faith in the divine promises through Jesus imitate, considering the end of their course; that is, the ending of their earthly course.* — Whether these had died a natural death, or had perished by martyrdom in some persecution raised by Jewish and Roman hatred, we have not the means of determining. In either case, the remembrance of them would strengthen the faith of the Hebrews. — The word *conversation* here is equivalent to *manner, or course, of life.* — In common editions of the English New Testament this verse ends with a colon, indicating that a complete sentence is not formed, and that the following verse is a part of the sentence. The meaning of the passage is thus made obscure. The verse ought to be ended with a period, as containing an entire sentence.

8. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, etc.* This verse should be translated as a sentence by itself; thus, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; that is, He is the same to-day as he was yesterday, the same now as in the past, and will forever be the same. He is unchangeable in his principles and purposes.* — This assertion seems introduced for the twofold purpose of showing the ground for

imitating the faith of the spiritual guides who had formerly preached the gospel to the Hebrews, and of cautioning them against being carried away by the erroneous doctrines which false teachers were seeking to introduce. As if it had been said, Jesus Christ, in whom your former guides believed, remains the same now as ever before, and is equally entitled to your unqualified credence and reliance as he was to theirs: he will forever in the future be the same, and will as surely reward your adherence to him as he did theirs. Hence, imitate their faith. The doctrines, also, which they maintained as the doctrines of Christ, are unalterable: hence, as in the following verse, adhere to them; be not carried away by any teachings alien to those doctrines.

9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; with doctrines diverse from, and foreign to, the religion of Christ: adhere to the true Christian doctrine.* Compare Eph. iv. 14. Reference is had to the Judaizing teachers who were endeavoring to amalgamate the gospel with principles and practices which were maintained by the Jews. || *For it is a good thing that the heart be established, etc.* It is right and profitable that a person's heart become steady and firm, and that *in grace*; that is, in the grace of God as made known by Jesus Christ and taught in the gospel; *not in meats*, not in Jewish statutes and customs relative to food for the body. — The Jewish precepts and usages related so extensively and precisely to articles of food, as being ceremonially clean or unclean, that the term *meats* here is expressive of the whole Jewish system of religious observances, as distinguished from the gospel which discloses the grace of God in bestowing salvation. Compare ix. 10. We ought

grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

¹⁰ We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. ¹¹ For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-

to be established as *Christians*, relying on the grace of God; not as *Jews*, sedulously observing the ceremonial law. || *Which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.* Those who have lived in scrupulous conformity to the Jewish distinctions relative to meats, distinctions multiplied and made more precise and stringent by traditions than by the original appointment, have gained from such practice no spiritual profit. On the contrary, the more scrupulously they have observed these distinctions, the further have they been from an abiding intelligent peace with God; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. Rom. xiv. 17.

10-16. As enforcing this distinction between the gospel of Christ and the Jewish ceremonial observances, a contrast is next presented between the Christians as a body of believers in Jesus, and the Jewish community as adherents to the Mosaic ritual. In this contrast, these two bodies are shown to be entirely distinct, as to the basis of their religious hopes, and incapable, as to religious principles, of commingling: those who persist in adherence to the Jewish ritual cannot participate in the benefits of the gospel; and since Christ, in order to be put to death, was taken out from the Jewish city, as unacknowledged and rejected by the nation, his followers must likewise, as to their religious position, separate themselves from the Jewish community, whatever reproach this might cause them.

10. *We have an altar; we, followers of Jesus, have an altar; but an entirely different one from the Jewish altar.* || *Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* Those who serve the tabernacle are the Jews, both the priests and the ordinary worshippers. See viii. 4, 5, where priests are mentioned as serving; ix. 9, where

the individual who brought the offering is mentioned as serving; also x. 2, where those in whose behalf the service was performed are similarly mentioned. — *To eat.* It was a provision of the Mosaic law, in regard to many of the animal sacrifices, that portions of them were appropriated to the officiating priests for food, and that the individuals bringing the sacrifices, in various instances, should eat portions of them. Of such sacrifices the Jews, in accordance with the rule regulating the observance, had the right to eat, and thus they obtained present immediate benefit from the altar which they acknowledged as *their* altar, the altar of their religion. *To eat of the altar*, that is, of things offered on the altar, was expressive of *deriving benefit* from the altar. But from the *Christian* altar, the Jews, persistently adhering to their own altar, that is, persisting in their religious principles and customs, can claim no benefit. The blessings and privileges which it conferred cannot be partaken of by them.

11. That Jews who adhere to the Mosaic observances cannot share in the blessings and privileges conferred by the Christian altar is next illustrated by an analogy drawn from the ritual observances in regard to the animals sacrificed on the annual day of atonement among the Jews. — *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood, etc.;* for the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high-priest as an expiatory offering, are carried forth out of the Jewish encampment and burned: they were no longer permitted to remain in the encampment, but were removed away from it and finally disposed of, as no longer needed, as having nothing more to do with the ritual observances. || *The sanctuary;* the inner apartment of the tabernacle, the *most*

priest for sin, are burned without the camp. ¹² Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. ¹³ Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. ¹⁴ For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. ¹⁵ By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of

holy place, as in ix. 3, 12, into which, once a year, the blood of expiation for the sins of the nation was carried by the high-priest, ix. 7. || *Without the camp*; outside of the Jewish encampment: the language being adapted to the time of the Israelites' journeyings in the wilderness.

12. *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people*, etc. On account of which practice and in correspondence to it, Jesus, that he might sanctify the people, that is, might make expiation and procure redemption for his people, ii. 11, x. 29, with his own blood, suffered death outside of the city-gate. He was made to go out of Jerusalem, the central spot of Judaism, as unsuitable to be allowed any longer to remain in it, as one rejected by the nation, as a person with whom the authorities representing the nation would have no connection, and from whom they spurned the thought of ever receiving good. || *Suffered*; suffered death, and thus became a propitiatory sacrifice. Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2.—The altar which believers in Jesus are here represented as having is *the cross* on which our Lord endured his sacrificial and propitiatory death, or offered up himself as our sacrifice. It is here employed as the visible emblem of the Christian religion. From this altar those who adhered to the Jewish religion and confided in its observances would have no right to expect blessings: they did not believe it to be a source of blessings, but treated it and its sacrifice with disdain.—It was, also, entirely different from the altar prescribed by the Mosaic law. It is indeed only by a figure of speech, though a very easy and appropriate figure, that it is called an altar. Jews would not acknowledge the Christian altar; and so would have no right to receive the blessings which

it secures for those who heartily acknowledge the sacrifice which was offered up on it.—Again; the Christian altar was not in the court of the tabernacle, not near the sacred enclosure of the Jews, or of Judaism; it was situated, so to speak, quite outside of Judaism: hence, avowed Jews, persisting in adherence to the national customs, could not receive blessings from it; they were incapable of apprehending and appreciating the blessings which it imparts.—Nor was it the *Jewish* high-priest that offered up the sacrifice on this altar; but *the great High-priest*, of an entirely different rank, who, moreover, was himself the voluntary offering unto God. See John x. 17, 18. "No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down of myself."

13. *Let us go forth therefore*, etc. Since, now, Jesus whom we acknowledge as our Head and Leader was, by the superintending providence of God, made to go out from Jerusalem, the representative city of Judaism, to suffer his ignominious death, let us then go out to him, as his followers, abandoning Judaism, bearing such reproach as he bore, and thinking it no strange thing to be treated, as our Leader was, with indignity and scorn.

14. *For here have we no continuing city*, etc. A reason is given for willingly withdrawing themselves from Jewish observances and enduring reproach as followers of Jesus, and indeed for holding themselves as pilgrims and strangers on the earth. *Here*, on earth, in this life, we have not a continuing city; there is here no city, nor country, that we regard as our permanent abode; our stay on earth is brief; we have no home here, but we are seeking for the city which is to come, the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. Compare xi. 13-16.

15. *By him therefore let us offer the*

praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

¹⁶ But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

¹⁷ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

sacrifice of praise, etc. Through Jesus, therefore, our High-priest, let us offer up, as our sacrifice, praise to God, a sacrifice far better than that of animals, Ps. lxxix. 30, 31, that is, to speak without a figure, Let us be grateful to God; let us with our lips make grateful acknowledgments to him. Compare Ps. l. 23; Hos. xiv. 2. The expression, *fruit of our lips*, is found in the Greek translation of Hosea, xiv. 3 [English version, xiv. 2], where the Hebrew has, agreeably to our English version, *calves of our lips*. The idea of both the expressions is the same, namely, Instead of animal sacrifices, let our sacrifice be that of our lips, offering to God the gratitude of our hearts.

16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not.* But let not this fruit of lips be merely lip-service; let it be connected with corresponding acts. Forget not the duty of doing good to others and of distributing to the necessities of fellow-Christians and of any in distress. || *For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.* God has pleasure in such sacrifices, or offerings, since they come from the heart and minister to the good of the needy. He acknowledges them as offerings well pleasing to himself, while the most costly and punctilious sacrifices of ceremonial worship he passes by as entirely unacceptable. Compare Is. i. 11-17; lviii. 1-11; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. l. 14, 23; 1 Pet. ii. 5.

17. *Obey them that have the rule over you; obey your spiritual guides.* See verse 7. — These men were known as having taken the oversight of the flock of God not by constraint, but willingly; not as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples of the

flock, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; not as having a spirit of domination, but as helpers of the Christians' faith and joy, 2 Cor. i. 24. Their instructions proceeded from their knowledge of the gospel and their steadfast purpose to act according to the divine will. || *Submit yourselves; cherish the deference which is due to the official work of your spiritual guides and their qualifications for it.* || *For they watch for your souls*, etc. The nature of their office, as designed to promote the salvation of men's souls, James i. 21, 1 Pet. i. 9, and their responsibility to Christ, whose servants they are and to whom they are to give account, 1 Pet. v. 4, require the obedience here enjoined. By a contrary spirit you will impede their work, endanger your salvation, make an ungrateful requital for their watchfulness in your behalf, and will hinder them from rendering up a fully satisfactory account. They act under the pressure of a grave responsibility: encourage them under this pressure by following their instructions. — The idea of a spiritual guide *watching*, guarding with sleepless care, in behalf of men, was also familiar to the ancient prophets. See Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. iii. 17; xxxiii. 2-7. || *That they may do it with joy; that they may perform this watching with joy, encouraged by your ready obedience; not with grief, not sorrowing, as they would, should you refuse to heed their instructions.* || *For this is unprofitable for you; your own benefit would be impeded.* You would dishearten them and repress their solicitous diligence for your eternal welfare. Specially would you displease God, and not only deprive yourselves of good, but incur the greatest harm. — The last clause

¹⁸ Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. ¹⁹ But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

of the verse is probably a soft expression for *This would be exceedingly harmful to you.*

18. *Pray for us.* A personal request for the intercessions of the Hebrew brethren is next presented. This is in accordance with the habit of the apostle Paul. See 1 Thess. v. 25; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Eph. vi. 19; Col. iv. 3; 2 Cor. i. 11. || *For we trust we have a good conscience;* a modest declaration of the writer's conscientiousness in all his conduct, whether his conduct was always acceptable to his Christian brethren and others, or not. Compare Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16. || *In all things willing to live honestly;* in all respects desiring to live rightly in the sight of God and of men. By this strong, yet modest, assertion he sought to awaken a fraternal confidence in reference to himself as an honest and earnest teacher of the gospel. This accords with the manner of the apostle Paul when seeking to remove difficulties which any of the Christians might have felt towards him. See Acts xxi. 20, 21.

19. *But I beseech you the rather to do this,* etc. He was not only conscious of a desire to pursue a right course in all respects, but was also particularly desirous to visit again the brethren to whom he was writing: I the rather beseech you to pray for me that I may be restored to you sooner than it has hitherto appeared possible. — It would seem, from verse 23, that he was not at this time in prison. He had doubtless been acquainted with those to whom he was writing, and had formerly labored among them as a preacher. He was now anticipating a renewal of his Christian intercourse with them.

20, 21. He now adds to this avowal of his own integrity and of his desire

to be again mingling in their society and to his request for their intercessions in his behalf, a most solemn expression of his desire for their becoming complete in Christian character and deeds by the effectual agency of God in their souls through Jesus Christ. — This expression of feeling for the Hebrews is introduced, not as a form of leave-taking, or farewell, but, in the manner of the apostle Paul, as an earnest Christian wish suggested by the subject under treatment or by some thought just uttered. Compare Rom. xv. 13; 1 Thess. v. 23. See also 1 Pet. v. 10.

20. *The God of peace;* an expression frequently used by the apostle Paul, referring to peace in the minds of true Christians towards God, peace between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, and the peaceable sentiments which the gospel inspires towards all men. As *peace* is also indicative of spiritual prosperity, the term *God of peace* may here be used in acknowledgment of him as the Author of all real good for time and eternity. See Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. v. 23. || *Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.* The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is ascribed to God also in Acts xiii. 30. In John x. 17, 18, it seems ascribed to an inherent power in Jesus. || *That great Shepherd of the sheep.* In John x. 11, 14, Jesus calls himself *the good Shepherd*; and in 1 Pet. v. 4, he is called the *chief Shepherd*. The figure of a flock under the care and guidance of a shepherd is here applied to the followers of Christ, owning him as their Leader and subjecting themselves to his guidance. || *Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.* These words are connected in sense with the

²¹ make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

²² And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

²³ Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

words brought again from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus took place *through*, or in accordance with, the blood of the covenant, since, in order that the promises of the new covenant might be completely fulfilled, it was not only necessary that Jesus should die and ratify the covenant with his blood, but also that he should become the ever-living High-priest of his people in the heavenly sanctuary. His resurrection consequently was secured by that covenant which was ratified with his blood. It is an *everlasting* covenant, as not being destined, like the first covenant, to become antiquated and to be set aside: it secures everlasting blessings.

21. *Make you perfect in every good work*; completely qualify you to meet every call of duty, so that you may be found not lacking in any good work. Compare 2 Cor. viii. 7; xiii. 11; 1 Pet. v. 10. || *To do his will*; so that you may do his will, Eph. vi. 6. For this result his inworking power is indispensable. || *Working in you*, etc. Compare Phil. i. 6, ii. 13. It is through Jesus Christ and by virtue of his gospel that God bestows on his people this completeness for doing his will. See also John xv. 5. || *To whom be glory*, etc. As the term *God of peace* is the leading one in the sentence, this clause may relate to it; according to the structure of the sentence, however, it more naturally refers to Jesus Christ. In 2 Tim. iv. 18; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Rev. i. 6, a similar formula evidently relates to Christ.

22. *Suffer the word of exhortation*; bear with, kindly admit, the exhortations herein sent you. The whole epistle is probably meant; and as a

considerable portion of it is after the method of direct exhortation, and the whole is such a treatment of its subject as was designed to strengthen the Hebrews in faith and obedience, it might be condescendingly thus designated. || *For I have written a letter unto you in few words*. Notwithstanding the length of the epistle, it is brief, considering the magnitude and comprehensiveness of the subject. Many additional topics might have been introduced; but the purpose of the epistle was best answered by restricting it to a brief compass.

23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty*. Through lack of historical data respecting Timothy, this verse is liable to a variety of explanations. The expression *is set at liberty* implies that he had been imprisoned; and the original word, though explained differently by some, is favorable to the opinion that Timothy was now released from some imprisonment. || *With whom, if he come shortly*, etc. It was the writer's purpose, if Timothy should come in good season, either from the place of his imprisonment or from some business on which he had been sent, to the place where the writer was, to visit the Hebrews in company with him. — It would seem that Timothy, as well as the writer, was well known to these Hebrews, and held by them in affectionate regard.

24. *Salute all them that have the rule over you*; salute all your spiritual guides. See verses 7 and 17. Compare Phil. i. 1. || *All the saints*. This term, as expressive of separation from irreligious men and of consecration to God in holy obedience to his will, had become appropriated to the disciples of

²⁴ Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

²⁵ Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

Christ. Compare iii. 1; Rom. i. 7. and bestows all spiritual good. Compare Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. With this commendation of his brethren to divine grace, either thus briefly expressed, Col. iv. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Tit. iii. 15, or somewhat enlarged, it was customary with the apostle Paul to

25. *Grace be with you all*; the grace which brings salvation, Tit. ii. 11,

close his epistles.

THE
PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST:

A

CONDENSED VIEW, AS PRESENTED IN THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

THE titles ascribed to our Lord illustrate his relations to us and our consequent duties and advantages. With such modifying information as the Scriptures furnish, we have not only comprehensive views, but also guards against hurtful mistakes.

Among these, the title *priest*, or *high-priest*, holds an eminent place, and presents him to us as an object of reverence, affection, obedience, and confidence.

The *manner* in which the priesthood of Christ is treated in this epistle is such as was natural to a writer of the age in which it was composed, and such as was required by the wants of that age, and by the habits of thought among the people for whose special benefit it was primarily intended; while the substantial view which it presents will in all time be full of interest to his disciples, since they are ever, while on earth, “compassed with infirmity,” and need the strength and solace which can come only from their great High-priest.

The epistle first shows, v. 1-4, the *design* of the high-priesthood agreeably to the law of Moses, and the requisites for the office. — A high-priest, as being taken from among men, was appointed “in behalf of men in things pertaining to God.” As Creator, Upholder, and Giver of all good, God ought to be acknowledged with suitable expressions of dependence and gratitude. Particularly as our moral Governor, ought we to acknowledge him in expressions of penitence, of trust in his pardoning mercy, and of obedience. A mediating agency,

accordingly, was appointed, under the Mosaic economy, through which these various acknowledgments should be made: man's sinfulness rendering it proper that his approach to God, even with tears of penitence, should be through such agency. Hence, the high-priest was appointed by the Mosaic law, in behalf of the people "to offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins," and to obtain for them favor with God.

Such being the design of the office, it was requisite that the high-priest should have a compassionate spirit towards the ignorant and erring. Firm against violations of duty to God, he yet ought to be gentle towards those who had wandered from the right path, but had become desirous to regain it; he was required not to be harsh, lest he should repel the trembling seeker of the divine favor, but by mild and considerate treatment to attract him, cherishing the ever-ready sympathy of intelligent benevolence. Specially appropriate was this qualification in a human high-priest, because he was himself a sinful man, conscious of needing, like others, the mercy of God. — Again; it was requisite, in order to enter lawfully on the office, that a man be called of God to it.

The epistle asserts, v. 5-10, that these qualifications met in the case of Jesus. "He did not glorify himself to be made a high-priest," but became such at the call of the supreme Father, who said to him, Thou art my Son, and, Thou art a priest forever. — To this eminent station he was exalted through humiliation, having subjected himself to frail, though sinless, humanity, to a trying experience of human obedience, to sufferings, and temptations from the evil One and from men; an experience of difficulty and of trial even from infancy, and particularly during the last days of his eventful sojourn on earth. 'Though being a son, yet the purpose for which he came required that he should learn obedience by sufferings' that through sufferings his always obedient spirit should not only be tested, but also be advanced in earnestness and strength; that he should know the difficulties of human obedience and the harassments of temptation, so that 'he might be able to succor the tempted.' His

human sufferings endear him as an object of confidence, while his divine dignity secures for him reverence; and most fittingly, therefore, he is our High-priest; faithful to God and merciful to us.

The epistle next, vii. 1-10, shows the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus to that of Aaron. This was made apparent to the original readers by a consideration of the fact that Jesus was made a priest after the likeness of Melchizedek, who was a king as well as a priest. The main argument is drawn from the ancient practice of paying tithes to priests, and from the circumstance, recorded in Gen. xiv. 20, that the patriarch Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. The force of the argument would be readily admitted by the original readers of the epistle, and would prepare the way for their admitting the important consequences which must flow from the priesthood's becoming vested in Jesus.

The entrance of Jesus on the high-priesthood was THE grand event in the history of religious dispensations. It was that to which all preceding divine arrangements for men's religious welfare were preliminary. In its bearing, consequently, on the Levitical priesthood, so revered by the Jewish nation, it was fraught with most serious consequences, and therefore the topic needed to be unfolded with caution and with transparent evidence. To this point the epistle next (vii. 11-18) turns. — The Jews were indulging the fond belief that their priesthood, divinely appointed, procured for them perfect expiation of sin, and final admission to heaven. But, the epistle argues, if perfection could be attained through the Levitical priesthood, what need was there that a different priest should arise, quite dissimilar from Aaron? The introduction of a priest, not like Aaron, but like Melchizedek, could be accounted for on no other ground than that the Aaronic priesthood was inadequate to the ultimate purposes of the office; that it could not procure valid forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The Jewish priesthood, consequently, was superseded and annihilated by the coming of Jesus into the priestly office. — Still further: Since the Law of

Moses rested on the Levitical priesthood, as a basis for whatever good the Law could bestow, and as there was thus a vital connection between the priesthood and the entire Law, whatever affected the priesthood affected also the Law: they stood, or fell, together. The change in the priesthood, then, necessitated a change in the Law. The whole Mosaic economy, as well as the priesthood, was superseded and abrogated: a Law, corresponding to the new priesthood, had taken its place. The prevailing sentiment among the Jews, that their priesthood and their religious economy were to be permanent, and that all nations were to be blessed through the Messiah by becoming proselytes to their faith and ranged with native Jews under his victorious rule, could no longer be entertained. Judaism was henceforth done away: the authority of the Mosaic law had ceased. This evidently resulted from the accession of Jesus to the priesthood, because the Mosaic law in reference to the priesthood was, in this event, entirely disregarded; for the Law directed that priests should be taken only from the tribe of Levi, whereas Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah. Also, the Mosaic law made provision for a *succession* of priests, since death was continually removing from office those who held it: yet the divine announcement which made Jesus the High-priest declared him a priest *forever*, to endure age after age, officiating not in the realm of mortality. — Thus a new economy was introduced; not a ceremonial, symbolical one, but a spiritual economy, adapted to the highest wants of men, providing for eternal life, procuring not temporary, but *eternal*, redemption.

This new spiritual economy, at the head of which is Christ as the mediating High-priest, is declared in the epistle to be vastly supereminent above the Mosaic, in the following points: —

1. It gives us access to God, vii. 19, without the medium of any earthly priest, or of any symbolical forms and ceremonies. Under the old economy God seemed to keep aloof from the people: communication with him was to be had by the agency of certain men whom he had appointed for that purpose and through the medium of external offerings. Now, on the con-

trary, we draw nigh to God personally, each one for himself, without the necessity of resorting to a priest on earth, to make sure of acceptance with him. The only priest now acknowledged of God as a medium of access to him is the Lord Jesus; and such is his person, that we may come to him in all confidence with our burden of sin and sorrow, with our gratitude, desires, and trust; for we are assured that the Father heareth him always, that the will of the Father is his will, and that if we honor the Son with our confidence we thereby honor the Father and do what is pleasing in his sight: or, again, we may draw nigh to the FATHER *through* the great High-priest, his relation to the Father being such that we do not thereby set an obscuring cloud between us and God; we come, as it were, more gradually to the brightness of the divine glory, God condescending to us and lifting us up nearer to his exalted plane. Indeed, so completely is an intervening earthly priesthood done away by the new spiritual dispensation that the disciples of Christ themselves are made kings and priests unto God, Rev. i. 6, v. 10, invested with dignity comparable to that of kings, and permitted access to God as real as was granted to the ancient accepted high-priests, so that they are, in the language of inspiration, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, “a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

2. The new dispensation presents a better covenant between God and his people, vii. 19. — The ancient covenant between God and his national people was a compact, or agreement, in which blessings were promised on condition of obedience to the commands of God. This obedience the people engaged to render, as we read in Ex. xix. 3-8: “If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” But they did not abide by their engage-

ment; they proved faithless to it: and such is the disordered state of human nature, that any blessings conditioned on obedience to law will be lost. This being foreseen, a better covenant was provided for the enduring dispensation of Christ: a covenant, rather, more correctly speaking, an arrangement, on the part of God, assuming that men are sinners and need spiritual renewal and pardoning mercy, and promising of his own free bounty these indispensable blessings. The nature of this arrangement is clearly set forth in the language of the prophet Jeremiah, xxxi. 31-34, as quoted in this epistle, viii. 8-12, — “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” God here promises to make his people *know* his will, to make their *hearts* conformed to it, and by this change in their minds and hearts to be their God and to own them as his people; being so merciful to them that he will no longer remember their sins. This system of grace and of promises rests not on their obedience to law, but on God’s faithfulness, and it requires on their part simply a cordial acceptance of the promised boon. This cordial acceptance of the promised boon on the part of those who feel their need of it is, in reality, faith in Christ who died to confirm the arrangement; a confiding in him not merely for the pardon which it offers, but also for the spirit of loving obedience to God’s will which it also equally offers, and without which a pardon would be of no avail. He who accepts this covenant becomes a disciple of Christ, and subjects himself to the religion of Christ, by which he is to be trained up in righteousness unto eternal life. Thus it is by faith in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit graciously influencing believers and perfecting their spiritual renovation, that the purposes of this

covenant are accomplished. It thus exactly meets the necessities of men, recovers them from condemnation to justification in the sight of God, and from entire sinfulness to holiness commenced and at length made perfect and everlasting. The difference between the old Mosaic covenant and the covenant of the gospel under the great High-priest is the same as is asserted in Rom. x. 5-10 between "the righteousness which is of the law" and "the righteousness which is of faith:" "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which DOETH those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith saith, That if thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The position is, indeed, fondly clung to by some, that the covenant anciently made with the national people of God is virtually identical with that which is made with believers in Christ. But, it must be considered, while *blessings* virtually identical would have followed obedience to the terms of the ancient covenant, it was reserved for the new covenant to provide for men *as sinners*, and to give a promise of grace for the renewal of their hearts, and a promise of pardoning mercy. The principle that men are ruined sinners was not recognized in the ancient covenant. And, agreeably to the teaching of the epistle, ix. 15, it was precisely for the reason that the new covenant contained an assurance of pardoning mercy that Christ was appointed its mediator, inasmuch as only HE could offer a sacrifice which would be availing to that extent. 'The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin;' no earthly high-priest could effect a saving reconciliation between men and God. To bring about such a result required the sacrifice of the Son of God; because his person was of inestimable value, it was HE who must be the mediator of the new covenant.

3. The perpetuity of the priesthood in the person of Christ shows also, vii. 24, the supereminence of the new dispensation. To the Hebrews, who had been accustomed to frequent changes of high-priests, this was a thought of great interest. To all

believers, also, it has an affecting significance, since it is perpetuity on the part of him who is, and who only could be, an *availing* High-priest. The efficacy of his *offering* endures; the efficacy of his *intercessions* endures, and never diminishes. Through all revolutions of time, from age to age, he holds the same relation to us, and will never cease to care for the interests which he has taken into his heart. Through all the diversified scenes of our earthly lot, he is ever the High-priest, compassionate and faithful. When first we became burdened with a sense of our sinfulness and could find no aid from any human source, we found safety and peace in committing ourselves to the great High-priest: year after year he has been our High-priest, and we have no occasion to wish for a change: years have multiplied, and he is still more and more precious, more and more trusted. And when we have reached the limit of our earthly sojourn, and with unwonted solemnity anticipate the rendering up of our account, or with unruffled peace have some foretaste of the heavenly rest, his faithfulness will abide: he will without fail present us faultless to God with exceeding joy; for “he has an unchangeable priesthood, and hence he is able to save to the uttermost, to save ENTIRELY, all who come unto God through him.”

4. The remaining particular, in the epistle, which shows the superior excellence of the spiritual dispensation under Jesus, as High-priest, is, that his sacrifice ONCE offered is ever-availing. vii. 27. It is never to be repeated; and no other, or additional, sacrifice for sin is required, or can be admitted. Under the old economy, the sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the nation was offered year by year; sacrifices were also offered every day; and, in the varying circumstances of individuals and families, special sacrifices were required, and were of constant occurrence. But the one sacrifice of Christ availed forever for carrying into effect the new covenant; and when he offered up himself as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world, the entire sacrificial system of the former date was annulled. This system, at its origin and during its entire history, pointed

to the great Sacrifice, and was ended when that was offered up *once for all*: it was a shadowing of "a better Sacrifice," ix. 23, and lost its intent and its place when that Sacrifice was offered up. This one sacrifice avails ever without repetition; for the forgiveness which it procures is so complete that the sins are remembered no more against the forgiven. x. 17. Should they, as, alas! they do through adverse influences, wander from the path of obedience and again become conscious of anew needing pardon and reconciliation, another sacrifice in their behalf is not required; but as at first they obtained mercy and peace through the death of Christ, so through the same sacrifice they anew find relief from guilt and sin. And so, through the whole period of their Christian life, the death of Christ is the sure basis for faith and hope, peace and joy; and when they reach heaven, they will unite with the myriads, saved through the sacrifice *once* offered, in the "new song," "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. v. 9 12.

Such are the particulars showing the supereminence of the new dispensation. But a question naturally arises here:—If it be only through the efficacy of Christ's death as ratifying the new covenant that sin can be forgiven in the sight of God, was there no forgiveness under the old covenant? The epistle distinctly replies to this inquiry:—Since such a sacrifice as that of Christ was necessary to the cleansing of the conscience, to forgiveness and acceptance with God, HE became the Mediator of the covenant which promised these blessings in order that, through his death, sins committed under the first covenant might be removed from those who were called of God, and that they might receive the promised eternal inheritance. ix. 15. The sacrifices of the law could not take away their sins, however punctiliously they observed them; a better sacrifice must be offered: and sins under the old covenant, when really forgiven so as to secure acceptance with God and a purified conscience, were forgiven through the prospective offering up of the pre-figured Lamb of God. This expected sacrifice was availing

beforehand, though even the pious of preceding times may not have fully understood the basis on which their acceptance rested. They were conscious of sinfulness; they heartily bewailed it; they reposed confidence in the mercy of God; and by the appointed sacrifice which they offered, and which was to them indicative of their sinfulness and ill-desert at the hand of God, they made confession of their sins and acknowledged their ill-desert. Thus, all the elements of genuine repentance and of faith in the propitiatory Sacrifice were possessed by the truly pious under the former covenant. — And hence throughout the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms and the other devotional books, we have expressions of genuine religious experience as really as in the New, though without distinct recognition of the basis of hope and without the clear and enlarged views of heavenly glory found in the New: hence, too, we have emphatic declarations in the Old Testament, of the mercy, kindness, and faithfulness of God to the penitent and those who trust in God, as well as in the New. — It is, indeed, sometimes said that the Old Testament presents God mainly as a just and holy Being, administering law; while in the New he appears as the God of grace and mercy, “reconciling the world unto himself.” But this savors too much of human systematizing. Let us not forget the disclosure which he made of himself to Moses, Ex. xxxiv. 6–7, as “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;” nor the oft-repeated avowals in the Old Testament that there is forgiveness with him, that he is slow unto anger, plenteous in redemption. It is indeed in the New Testament that we learn *how* God can be just and justify the ungodly, and that we find the most affecting motives for seeking mercy and walking in the way of piety and salvation.

The death of Christ, then, had a retrospective efficacy: in other words, the certainty that he would offer up himself as a propitiatory sacrifice furnished a basis for the spiritual and eternal blessings of the new covenant to be bestowed even

before it was actually confirmed. A similar idea appears, also, in Rom. iii. 25, where the death of Christ is mentioned as accounting for the forbearance of God towards sins in preceding ages. — In this we see the importance of the pre-existence of Christ in eternity before the foundation of the world; for his anticipated offering was not that of a person who, not yet existing, should in future ages come into being; but it was HE, who was the Beloved of the Father before the foundation of the world, that was in due time to take the form of man and to humble himself to the very lowest plane of humanity, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross, that ‘with his precious blood we might be redeemed.’ 1 Pet. i. 18–19. Ratified, indeed, was the covenant when such an One “poured out his soul unto death,” Is. liii. 12, for that purpose; available indeed might its provision be ages before the death actually took place. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. xiii. 8.*

WHERE and HOW does Christ perform his priestly ministrations? — The question, *Where*, is answered in the epistle, viii. 2; ix. 11, 12, with sufficient clearness. A figurative mode of representation is employed, suited to conceptions habitual to its first readers. In the account of the arrangements for making the Hebrew sacred tabernacle, Ex. xxv. 9, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8, a model according to which the structure was to be fashioned appears to have been shown to Moses in the mount. This model, shown in what we might call a vision, came to be conceived of as a structure in heaven, a tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. This tabernacle in heaven, of which that on earth was regarded as a copy or shadow, was considered as of perpetual duration; and into the holy of holies on high Jesus ascended, thus appearing in the presence of God in behalf of his people. Such is the figurative representation. That the writer of the epistle regarded it as figurative would appear from the fact that in a subsequent passage, ix. 24, he says, Christ is ascended into *heaven* itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Christ, then, went up to *heaven*, the

abode of God, there to consummate his priestly work in behalf of his followers.

The question, *How* he performed and still performs his priestly office, will be variously answered according as we accustom ourselves to discriminate between the representation and the essence of things, between the material and the spiritual. — It was the distinguishing work of the Jewish high-priest to slay the sacrificial victim on the day of atonement for the nation and to offer its blood in the most holy apartment of the tabernacle, where God made a visible representation of himself; and there the high-priest appeared virtually as an intercessor. So Jesus, having given up himself to death as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men, ascended in due time to his Father, carrying with him, *virtually*, not literally, of course, but *virtually*, his own blood, inasmuch as he ascended after having shed his sacrificial blood. This offering up of himself as a sacrifice and this entering, virtually with his own blood, into the presence of God, was done *once for all*. ix. 12, 25, 26; x. 10, 12. The remembrance, however, of this transaction, never ceases; and his ever-during presence with the Father is the ever-during presence of that beloved Son in whom the Father is ever well pleased because he laid down his life for his people. John, x. 17.

But while this part of the priestly work was done *once for all*, the intercessory work of priesthood appears to be abiding; for “Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us.” vii. 25. Rom. viii. 34. *How* is this performed? Here, we must think of heaven as a spiritual state, and of Christ in his present spiritual nature; all the material and earthly associations which we may connect with Christ in his heavenly employments are merely expedients which our earthly nature and circumstances suggest or require. The priestly service of Christ in heaven is spiritual. The mode, then, of his intercession, if there be any mode, is entirely beyond our apprehension; for while in the body we have no way of conceiving how spiritual beings act, whose mode of existence is so different from ours. We must, then, content ourselves with knowing the thing itself; namely, that

Christ bears his followers, collectively and individually, on his heart, and leaves them not to suffer the lack of any good thing, but maintains in their behalf a perpetual intercourse with the Almighty Father. He sustains to his followers a relation like that of an intercessor, and whatever is needful for them in their spiritual contests, in their sorrows, in their pressure of duty, he will provide.

This going beyond the material representation and resting content with knowing the fact that Christ acts as our intercessor has a parallel in what, doubtless, is ordinarily the operation of our minds when we think of Christ as the *king* of his people and for his people. We do not regard as necessary an actual throne in heaven, Heb. i. 8, 13, Rev. iii. 21, occupied by him after the manner of men; nor do we think of him as actually holding a sceptre indicative of royalty. All the language on this point has its full explanation in the fact that he is invested with complete authority and power over his people, over all things indeed, and for the benefit of his people; and by this power he controls all things and brings into effect the good pleasure of his goodness. An earthly king is clothed with power: a good earthly king employs his power for the benefit of his subjects, being a praise to them that do well, and a terror to evil-doers. So Christ sustains such a relation to his followers and to the human race as involves kingly power. And while this relation is one eminently of authority, he also sustains the priestly relation, and cherishes for us the affectionate interest of an intercessor. He thus, in ways beyond our capacity to apprehend, secures all suitable favor for us, who most pressingly need condescension, grace, and consolation from on high.

A

TRANSLATION

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,

PREPARED FOR THIS WORK.

NOTICE.

As the following translation is not a paraphrase, but aims, with very considerable regard to literalness of expression, to observe the difference between a translation and a commentary, reference to the preceding Notes will be necessary for explaining peculiarities of phraseology, as well as for showing the connection and purport of various passages.—The use of Italics here, as in our common version, is, to indicate words not in the original, but supplied by the translator, as the sense seemed to require.—For the most part, the common Greek text is here followed; but in some instances, the punctuation and the words of recent critical editions are adopted.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

PART FIRST.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, CONTRASTED WITH ANGELS.

CHAPTER I.

The dignity of the Son of God declared in general terms, 1-4.—His superiority to the angels, 5-14.

¹ GOD, who in many portions and many ways anciently spake to our fathers in the prophets, ²at the last of these days^a spake to us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: ³who, being the effulgence of his glory and the impress of his substance, upholding, too, all things by the word of his power, after making by himself purification of our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become so much greater than the angels as he has inherited a more distinguished name than they.

⁵ For to which one of the angels did he ever say, Thou art my Son; I have to-day begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son? ⁶When also, again, he brought the First-born into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. ⁷Also, of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, and his servants a flame of fire; ⁸but of the Son, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy reign; ⁹thou didst love righteousness and hate iniquity: therefore God, thy God, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. ¹⁰And,

^a *These days*: the ante-Messianic times.— See Notes.

Thou at the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are works of thy hands: ¹¹they will perish, but thou abidest; and they all, as a garment, will become old, ¹²and as a mantle thou wilt fold them up and they will be changed: but thou art the same and thy years will not fail. — ¹³But to which one of the angels has he ever said, Sit thou at my right hand till I have made thine enemies thy footstool? ¹⁴Are not all they ministering spirits sent forth for service on account of those who are to inherit salvation?

CHAPTER II.

The consequent duty of obedience to him, 1-4. — The appointed inferiority of the Son of God to the angels by his becoming a son of man, and his subsequent elevation to perfect glory, 5-10. — The propriety of his becoming a partaker of the human nature, 10-18.

¹THEREFORE we ought the more abundantly to give heed to the things which have been heard, lest we should miss of *the promised good*. ²For if the word spoken by angels was made firm, and all transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, ³how shall we escape after neglecting so great salvation, which, having been at the first spoken by the Lord, has come confirmed to us by those who heard *him*, ⁴God witnessing to it with them by signs and wonders and various miracles and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will?

⁵For not to angels did he subject the world to come,^a of which we are speaking: ⁶but a certain one somewhere testified, saying, What is man that thou rememberest him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? ⁷Thou didst make him a little lower than angels, with glory and honor didst thou crown him, all things didst thou put in subjection under his feet. For in ⁸subjecting to him all things, he left nothing not subjected to

^a *The world to come*: The Messiah's dispensation. — See Notes.

him.^b Now indeed we do not yet see all things subjected to him; ⁹but we see him who was made a little lower than angels, Jesus, crowned with glory and honor on account of the suffering of death, in order that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man.

¹⁰For it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things to perfect^c *him* through sufferings, *since* he was bringing many sons of God unto glory, as the leader of their salvation. ¹¹For both he who sanctifieth^d and they who are sanctified are all from one *Father*: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; ¹²saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will sing praises to thee: ¹³and again, I will be trusting in Him: and again, Behold, I and the children whom God gave me. ¹⁴Since, then, the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself also in like manner shared with them in the same, that by means of death he might bring to nought him that has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver them who by fear of death were all their lifetime subjects of bondage: ¹⁶for verily not of angels does he take hold *to deliver them*, but of the seed of Abraham he takes hold. ¹⁷Whence he ought in all respects to be made like his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, so as to make propitiation for the sins of the people: ¹⁸for in that he hath himself suffered, having been tempted, he is able to succor those who are tempted.

^b See Notes.

^c *To perfect him*: to exalt him to his perfect state of glory.—See Notes.

^d *Sanctifieth*.—See Notes.

PART SECOND.

SUPERIORITY OF JESUS CHRIST TO MOSES IN THE HOUSE, THAT IS, THE FAMILY, OF GOD.

CHAPTER III.

Faithfulness ascribed both to Moses and to Jesus: but the position held by Christ in the family of God far more dignified than that of Moses, 1-6.— Hortatory section, urging the Hebrews to make sure of the heavenly rest remaining for the people of God, 7-19.

¹WHENCE, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, carefully consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Jesus, ²who is faithful to Him that appointed him, as Moses also *was faithful* in His house.^a ³For this person has been deemed worthy of more honor than Moses, by as much as he who built the house hath more honor than the house. (⁴For every house is built by some one: yet it is God who built all things.)

⁵And Moses was indeed faithful in all His house as a servant, for testifying of the things that were to be spoken: ⁶but Christ *is faithful* as a Son over His house, whose house are we if we hold fast to the end the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope.

⁷Wherefore,— as saith the Holy Spirit, “To-day if ye shall hear his voice, ⁸harden not your hearts as in the provocation during the day of the temptation in the desert, ⁹when your fathers tempted me: they put me to the proof, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was wroth with that generation, and said, They are always erring in their heart; also they knew not my ways: ¹¹so I swore in my anger, They shall not enter into my rest” — ¹²see, brethren, lest there shall be in any

^a *His house*: the household, or family, of God.

one of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another every day, while it is called To-day, lest any one from among you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, if indeed we hold the beginning of the confidence *in him* firm unto the end. ¹⁵ While it is said To-day, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ¹⁶ For who were they that, having heard, provoked *God*? But—*why do I ask this?* Were they not all those who came out from Egypt by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he wroth forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the desert? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ We see, too, that they could not enter into *it* on account of unbelief.

CHAPTER IV.

Hortatory section, 1-10.—The searching nature of God's word and his perfect knowledge of us, as enforcing the exhortation, 11-13.—Encouragement to steadfastness, from the compassion of our High-priest in heaven through whom mercy and grace may be obtained, 14-16.

¹ LET us, then, fear lest, a promise of entering into his rest remaining, any one from among you may seem to have come short of it. ² For to us also glad tidings have been proclaimed, as well as to them: but the declaration which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard. ³ For we enter into THE REST who have believed; according as he said, So I swear in my anger, They shall not enter into MY REST, though the works *of God* were done, *and he entered on his rest*, from the foundation of the world (⁴for somewhere he has said concerning the seventh day thus, And God RESTED on the seventh day from all his works); ⁵and in this *place*, again, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER into my rest. ⁶ Since, then, it remains that some are to enter into it, and they to whom the glad tidings were before proclaimed did not enter in, on account of disobedience, ⁷he again marks out a certain day, *namely*, To-day,

saying in David after so long a time, as has already been said, **TO-DAY** if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your heart. ⁸For if Joshua had given them **THE REST**, then *God* would not have spoken, afterward, of another day. ⁹There *still* remaineth, therefore, a resting to the people of God; ¹⁰for he who has entered into His rest, also, himself rested from his works like as God did from his own.

¹¹Let us be in earnest, then, to enter into that rest, lest any one fall after the same example of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living, and effective, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing through even unto the dividing of soul and of spirit, of joints also and of marrow, and judging the thoughts and intents of the heart: ¹³and there is not a creature that is unseen in his presence; but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

¹⁴Having, then, a great High-priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the profession. ¹⁵For we have not a high-priest who cannot feel with us in our infirmities, but one who has been tempted in all things like ourselves, without sin. ¹⁶Let us, then, come with freeness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable aid.

PART THIRD.

JESUS CHRIST, THE HIGH-PRIEST, SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL HIGH-PRIESTS.

CHAPTER V.

Requisites for the high-priestly office, 1-4. — These requisites found in Jesus,
5-10. — Hortatory section, 11-14.

¹FOR every high-priest, being taken from among men, is appointed in behalf of men, as to things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; ²one who can be compassionate to the ignorant and erring, since he also himself is compassed with infirmity: ³and on account of it he must, as for the people, so too for himself, offer for sins. ⁴And not to himself does any one take the honor, but as called of God, even as also was Aaron. ⁵So, too, Christ did not glorify himself to be made a high-priest; but He that said to him, Thou art my Son, I have this day begotten thee; ⁶as also in another place he says, Thou art a priest forever according to the rank of Melchizedek: ⁷who in the days of his flesh, having with earnest outcry and tears offered up prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard on account of his godly fear, ⁸though being a son, learned, from the things which he suffered, obedience: ⁹and having been perfected he became to all who obey him the author of eternal salvation, ¹⁰having been addressed of God as a High-priest according to the rank of Melchizedek.

¹¹Concerning whom ^a we have much to say, and that hard to explain since ye have become dull of hearing: ¹²for even though, on account of the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye

^a Whom; Melchizedek.

again have need of one's teaching you what are the first rudiments of the oracles of God, and have come to need milk, not solid food. ¹³ For every one that partaketh of the milk is unskilled as to the word of righteousness; for he is an infant: ¹⁴ but the solid food is that of the mature, those who through use have their faculties trained to discerning both good and evil.

CHAPTER VI.

Hortatory section, 1-20.

¹ WHEREFORE, leaving the primary instruction concerning Christ, let us advance to the *stage of* maturity; not again laying a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith in God, ² of teaching of baptisms, also of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead also, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do, if God permit. ⁴ For it is impossible again to renew unto repentance those who have been once enlightened, who have tasted too of the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God, the powers, too, of the world to come, ⁶ and have fallen away, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God and exposing him to public shame. ⁷ For, land which has drunk the rain often coming upon it and bringeth forth plants suitable for them on whose account it is also tilled, partaketh of a blessing from God: ⁸ but if it produce thorns and briers, it is worthless and nigh to a curse, whose end is burning.

⁹ But we are persuaded concerning you, beloved, better things, and things connected with salvation, though we even thus speak. ¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous *so as* to forget your work and the love which ye showed towards his name, in that ye ministered to the saints and still minister: ¹¹ but we desire every one of you to show the same earnestness for the full assurance of the hope unto the end, ¹² so that ye may not become slothful, but imitators of those who through faith and patient endurance are inheriting the promises. ¹³ For God, having made promise to Abraham,

since he could swear by no one greater, sware by himself, ¹⁴saying, Assuredly blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee: ¹⁵and thus, having patiently endured, he obtained *the fulfilment of the promise*. ¹⁶For men indeed swear by One greater; and the oath is an end of all controversy to them, for confirmation: ¹⁷conformably to which, God, purposing to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his purpose, interposed with an oath; ¹⁸in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie, we may have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us: ¹⁹which, as an anchor of the soul, we have both unfailing and firm and entering into the *space* within the veil, ²⁰whither, a forerunner in our behalf, Jesus entered, having become forever a High-priest, according to the rank of Melchizedek.

CHAPTER VII.

Coincidences between Melchizedek and Christ, 1-3. — Greatness of Melchizedek and implied greatness of Jesus as High-priest, 4-10. — Imperfectness of the Levitical priesthood and of the Mosaic law: abrogation of the Law and establishment of the better dispensation, 11-19. — Superiority of Christ's priesthood further shown, 20-23.

¹For this man, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God the most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ²to whom also Abraham apporportioned a tithe of all, being, first, interpreted king of righteousness, and then, also, king of Salem, which is, king of peace, ³without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but being made like the Son of God, remaineth a priest perpetually.

⁴Consider, now, how great was this man to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave also a tithe from the spoils. ⁵And those, indeed, of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood, have a command to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though *these* came out of the loins of Abra-

ham; ⁶but he who is not traced in genealogy from them took tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises: ⁷and, without any contradiction, the less is blessed by the greater. ⁸And here,^a indeed, men who die receive tithes; but there,^b he *received them* who is testified of that he is living. ⁹And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes; ¹⁰for he was even then in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹If indeed, then, there were perfection by means of the Levitical priesthood (for on the ground of this the people was furnished with the Law), what need, henceforth, that a different priest should arise according to the rank of Melchizedek, and that he should not be spoken of as according to the rank of Aaron? ¹²For the priesthood being changed, of necessity a change, also, of the Law is made: ¹³for he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no one hath attended at the altar. ¹⁴For it is well known, that from Judah our Lord sprang, in respect to which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priests. — ¹⁵And still more abundantly manifest it is, that^c according to the likeness of MELCHIZEDEK there ariseth a different priest, ¹⁶who has become *a priest*, not according to the rule of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life; ¹⁷for he is *thus* testified of, — Thou art a priest FOREVER according to the rank of Melchizedek. ¹⁸For, on the one hand, there takes place a setting aside of the commandment which preceded, on account of its being weak and profitless (¹⁹for the Law carried nothing to perfection); and, on the other hand, an introduction of a better hope, by means of which we draw nigh to God.

²⁰And, by as much as not without the swearing of an oath *he was made a priest* — ²¹for these, indeed, are priests made without the swearing of an oath, but he, with the swearing of an oath

^a *Here*; on the part of the sons of Levi.

^b *There*; on the part of Melchizedek.

^c *That*; literally, *if*, equivalent to *whether*.

by Him who said to him, The LORD sware, and he will not repent, Thou art a priest forever—²² by so much has Jesus become surety of a more excellent covenant.—²³ And these, indeed, are made priests very many, on account of being hindered by death from continuing; ²⁴ but he, on account of his continuing *in life* forever, hath the priesthood not passing to another. ²⁵ Whence he is able to save entirely those who come unto God through him, ever living so as to intercede for them.

²⁶ For such a High-priest was, also, suitable for us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who has not need daily, as the high-priests, first for his own sins to offer sacrifices, afterwards for those of the people: for this he did once for all, having offered up himself. ²⁸ For the Law appoints men high-priests, who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was sworn subsequently to the Law, appoints THE SON, who is perfected forever.

PART FOURTH.

SUPERIORITY OF THE HIGH-PRIESTLY MINISTRATION OF CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLY HOLY OF HOLIES.

CHAPTER VIII.

The ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as much more excellent than that in the earthly, as the covenant of which he is mediator is more excellent than the old covenant, 1-7. — Promises of the new covenant, 8-13.

¹THE PRINCIPAL MATTER, now, concerning the things we are speaking of.

We have such a High-priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a minister of the holy of holies, even of the true tabernacle which the LORD pitched, not man. ³For every high-priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: whence it is necessary that this *priest* also have something which he may offer. ⁴For if, indeed, he were on earth, he would not be a priest, there being those who offer the gifts according to the law, ⁵who serve the copy and shadow^a of the heavenly *sanctuary*, according as Moses was divinely admonished when about to make the tabernacle: for “See,” saith He, “that thou make all things according to the pattern which has been shown to thee in the mount.”

⁶But now he has obtained a more excellent *priestly* service, by as much as he is the mediator of a better covenant which has been established on better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless,^b there would not be sought a place for a second. ⁸For, finding fault with them, he says, “Behold, the

^a *Who serve*, etc.; who officiate in that which is but a copy of the heavenly sanctuary.

^b *Faultless*; without defect.

days are coming, saith the LORD; and I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant, ⁹not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to lead them out from the land of Egypt; because they did not abide in my covenant, and I ceased to care for them, saith the LORD. ¹⁰For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD, putting my laws into their mind, even on their hearts will I write them, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people: ¹¹and they shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, Know thou the LORD; for they all shall know me from the least of them to the greatest of them: ¹²for I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins I will not at all still remember." — ¹³In saying NEW, he has pronounced the first *covenant* antiquated: now anything antiquated and grown old is near to being put out of sight.

CHAPTER IX.

The earthly tabernacle and its priestly service in contrast with the heavenly and its service, 1-14. — The new covenant has Christ for its mediator, on account of the efficacy of his death, which was necessary for its validity, 15-23. — Christ entered into heaven in our behalf with his own blood, which he offered once forever, 24-28.

¹THE first *covenant*, then, had also precepts regulating the service, and an earthly sanctuary. ²For the first *apartment of the* tabernacle was prepared, in which were the candlestick and the table and the show-bread, which *apartment* is called Holy: ³and after the second veil was the tabernacle-*apartment* which is called Most holy, ⁴having a golden censer and the ark of the covenant covered all around with gold, in which were a golden vase having the manna, and the rod of Aaron which sprouted, and the tables of the covenant; ⁵up above it, also, the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat: concerning which things it is

not now *pertinent* to speak particularly. ⁶These things, then, having been thus prepared, into the first *apartment of the* tabernacle the priests enter at all times performing the services; ⁷but into the second, once a year the high-priest only, not without blood which he offers for his own errors and those of the people: ⁸the Holy Spirit signifying this, that the way to the *real* Most holy *place* was not yet made manifest while the first *apartment of the* tabernacle was standing; ⁹which figurative significancy *has continued* to the present time, at which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot, in respect to conscience, carry the worshipper to perfection: ¹⁰carnal ordinances, imposed only until the time of re-formation, concerning articles of eating and drinking and various immersings.

¹¹But Christ having come, a High-priest of the future good things, by means of a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this *material* creation, ¹²nor by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, entered once for all into the Most holy *place*, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³For, if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the defiled, make holy for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by means of an eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

¹⁵And on this account he is mediator of the new covenant, so that, his death having taken place for redemption from transgressions during the first covenant, those who have been called might receive *fulfilled* the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶For where there is a covenant *disposing of an inheritance* [*that is, a testament*], there is necessity that the testator's death be ad-duced: ¹⁷for a testament *becomes firm when resting* on dead persons, since it is never valid while the testator is alive. ¹⁸Whence, not even the first covenant was consecrated without blood: ¹⁹for every command having been spoken according to the law by Moses to all the people, taking the blood of the

calves and the goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined on you." ²¹And the tabernacle, moreover, and all the utensils of the service, he sprinkled, in like manner with the blood; ²²and almost all things are, according to the law, purified with blood, and without blood-shedding remission does not take place.

²³There was necessity, then, that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these *sacrificed animals*; but the heavenly things themselves with more excellent sacrifices than these; ²⁴for not into a Holy of holies made by hands did Christ enter, a resemblance of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God in our behalf. ²⁵Nor *did he enter thither* that he might often offer himself, as the high-priest enters into the most holy place year by year with blood not his own; ²⁶for then it would be necessary that he should often have suffered from the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages^a he has made his appearance for the removal of sin by his sacrifice. — ²⁷And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this, judgment; ²⁸so likewise Christ, having once offered up himself in order to bear the sins of many, will appear, a second time, without sin, to those who are waiting for him, for salvation.

^a *End of the ages*; end of the ante-Messianic period.

CHAPTER X.

The Law cannot, with its perpetual repetition of the same sacrifices, procure a perfect expiation : indeed, it kept alive the consciousness of guilt. In order to make an efficacious and acceptable offering and to secure for us heavenly blessings, Christ came, 1-10.—The priests under the Law never attain a higher official position than that of perpetually offering the same sacrifices which cannot avail for expiation : but Christ, having offered one sacrifice, sat down forever at the right hand of God, in expectation of universal dominion, having made a perfect and ever-abiding expiation, 11-14, agreeably to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the promises of the new covenant, 15-18.

¹ For the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, not the image itself of the things, can never make perfect those who come year after year to the same sacrifices which they offer. ² For then, would they not have ceased being offered on account of the worshippers having henceforth no consciousness of sins, having been once purified? ³ But in these *sacrifices* is a remembrance of sins year after year: ⁴ for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. ⁵ Wherefore coming into the world he saith, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: but a body didst thou prepare for me: ⁶ whole burnt-offerings and *offerings* for sins thou wast not pleased with. ⁷ Then said I, Behold, I am come — in the roll of the book it has been written concerning me — to do, O God, thy will.” ⁸ Above, saying that ‘Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and *offerings* for sins thou didst not desire, nor wast pleased with,’ those which are offered according to the law; ⁹ then he said, ‘Behold, I am come to do thy will.’ He takes away the first *declaration*, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰ In accordance with which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ Also, every priest, indeed, has stood day by day officiating and many times offering the same sacrifices, those which can never wholly take away sins: ¹² but he, having offered one sacrifice

for sins, sat down forever at the right hand of God, ¹³henceforward waiting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴For by one offering he hath perfected forever those who are sanctified. ¹⁵The Holy Spirit even, also, testifies *this* to us, for after having before said, ¹⁶“ This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days, the LORD saith, Putting my laws upon their heart, even on their minds I will write them; ¹⁷and their sins and their iniquities I will not at all still remember.” ¹⁸Where, now, there is forgiveness of these, no longer is there an offering for sin.

PART FIFTH.

EXHORTATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO A FAITHFUL MAINTENANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION.

CHAPTER X. 19-39.

Abiding faith essential, 19-39.

¹⁹ Having, then, brethren, confidence to *come into* the entrance-way of the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ which *way* he dedicated ^a for us, a way new and living, through the veil, that is, his flesh, ²¹ and *having* a great Priest over the house of God, ²² let us come to *God* with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having been sprinkled as to our hearts from an evil conscience and bathed as to our body with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the profession of the hope, an unwavering *profession*; for faithful is he who promised. ²⁴ And let us consider one another for incitement to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *each other*, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing near.

²⁶ For if we sin willingly after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remaineth a sacrifice for sins: ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, which is ready to devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Whoever violated the law of Moses died without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses: ²⁹ of how much worse punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy who trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted as unholy the blood of the covenant, *the blood* by which he was sanctified, and who contemned the Spirit of grace! ³⁰ For we know him that said, "Vengeance belongeth to me, I will repay," saith the LORD; and again, "The LORD will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

^a *Dedicated*; inaugurated, first opened.

³² But call to mind the former days, in which after being enlightened ye endured a great conflict with sufferings, ³³ partly being by reproaches and distresses made a spectacle of, partly having become sharers with those who were thus living *in affliction*. ³⁴ For ye had compassion on those who were in bonds, and accepted with joy the seizure of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession in heaven and an enduring one. ³⁵ Cast not away, then, your confidence, which has a great reward: ³⁶ for ye have need of patient endurance, in order that, after doing the will of God, ye may receive the promised blessing. ³⁷ For, yet a very little while, “The coming One will come and will not tarry: ³⁸ but the righteous man shall live by faith; and if he draw back, my soul is not well pleased with him.” — ³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back, to perdition; but of those who maintain faith, to the salvation of the soul.

CHAPTER XI.

Abiding faith encouraged by examples, 1-10.

¹ FAITH, now, is a strong confidence as to things hoped for, a firm conviction of things not seen. ² For by this the ancients obtained the good testimony which is borne *to them*. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; to the purport that the things which are seen were not made out of visible *materials*. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which *faith* he obtained testimony that he was righteous, God bearing testimony concerning his gifts; and by it he, *though* dead, yet speaketh. ⁵ By faith Enoch was translated, so that he did not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation it was testified of him that “he pleased God.” ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him; for it is necessary that a person coming to God should believe that he is and that

to those who diligently seek after him he becomes a rewarder. ⁷By faith Noah, having been divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved by godly fear, prepared the ark for the preservation of his household; by which *faith* he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness according to faith.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed, being called to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he was going. ⁹By faith he sojourned in the promised land as a foreign land, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰for he was expecting the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹¹By faith also Sarah herself received strength for conception even when past age, because she counted him faithful who promised. ¹²Therefore sprang there from one man, and him as good as dead, a posterity even as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand by the sea-shore which cannot be numbered.

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the promises *in fulfilment*, but having seen them afar off and welcomed them, and having professed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth: ¹⁴for those who say such things make it evident that they are seeking a home-land. ¹⁵And if they had borne in mind that from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to return; ¹⁶but now they seek a better, that is, a heavenly land. Whence God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he prepared for them a city.

¹⁷By faith Abraham offered up Isaac, when put to the proof; even his only begotten son he offered up, he who had received the promises, ¹⁸to whom it was said, In Isaac shall a seed be called for thee, ¹⁹since he accounted that God was able to raise *him* even from the dead; whence he also, figuratively, obtained him. ²⁰By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning future things. ²¹By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and bowed in worship on the top of his staff. ²²By

faith Joseph, when dying, made mention of the departure of the sons of Israel, and gave command concerning his bones.

²³ By faith Moses, when born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw him a fair-appearing child, and they feared not the decree of the king. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer wrong with the people of God than to have a temporary enjoyment of sin, ²⁶ since he regarded the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the recompense. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he was steadfast, as seeing the invisible One. ²⁸ By faith he instituted the pass-over and the shedding of the blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. ²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry ground; which the Egyptians trying were swallowed up. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, having been encompassed seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab, the harlot, perished not with the disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

³² And what further do I say? For the time would fail me telling of Gideon, Barak also, and Samson, and Jephthah, David also, and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong from weakness, became mighty in battle, turned to flight armies of foreigners: ³⁵ women obtained their dead ones by resurrection; while others were beaten to death, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others, too, had trial of scourgings and scourgings, and still further of bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, died by the slaying of the sword, went about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins; destitute, distressed, ill-treated, — ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy, — wandering in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth.

³⁹ And these all, having been well testified of through faith,

did not obtain *the full accomplishment of* the promise, ⁴⁰ God having, on account of us, provided something better, that they without us might not be perfected.

CHAPTER XII.

Perseverance under trials, 1-17, in view of the grace and authority of the Gospel-dispensation, 18-29.

¹ WHEREFORE, having so great a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, let us also, laying aside every weight and sin which easily besets us, through patience run the race set before us, ² looking away to the leader and perfecter of the faith, Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For, consider him who has endured such opposition by sinners against himself, so that ye may not become weary, desponding in your souls.

⁴ Not yet unto blood have ye resisted, striving against sin: ⁵ and ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaketh to you as to sons, "My son, make not light of the chastening of the Lord, nor despond when rebuked by him; ⁶ for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." ⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? ⁸ But if ye be without chastening, of which all *sons* have been partakers, then ye are bastards, and not sons. ⁹ Then, again, the fathers of our flesh we had as chasteners *of us*, and we revered them: shall we not much rather submit ourselves to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they, indeed, for a few days chastened us as it seemed fit to them; but he, for our profit, so that we might partake of his holiness. ¹¹ All chastening, however, seems not, for the present, a matter of joy, but of sorrow; yet at last it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to them who are trained up thereby.

¹²Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and *strengthen* the enfeebled knees; ¹³and make even paths for your feet, so that the lamed *limb* may not be turned out of *the way*, but may rather be healed. ¹⁴Follow peace with all, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord; ¹⁵looking carefully that no one fail of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness growing up trouble you, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶that no one be a fornicator, or a profane man as Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright. ¹⁷For ye know that also, afterwards, *when* wishing to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found not a place of repentance, though with tears he earnestly sought it.

¹⁸For ye have not come to the mount that could be touched and that was burning with fire, and to thick darkness and blackness and a tempest, ¹⁹and to the noise of a trumpet and the sound of words, which *sound* they who heard entreated that not a word in addition should be spoken to them; ²⁰for they could not bear that which was commanded, "And even if a beast touch the mount it shall be stoned:" ²¹and, so fearful was the sight, Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and tremble." ²²But ye have come to mount Sion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads, the joyous gathering of angels, ²³and the church of the first-born enrolled in heaven, and to the Judge of all, God, and to the spirits of the perfected righteous, ²⁴and to the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than Abel *spake*.

²⁵See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they did not escape who refused him that on earth delivered to them instructions from God, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him *who speaks to us* from heaven: ²⁶whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." ²⁷Now this *expression*, Yet once more, indicates the removal of the things which are shaken, that the things not shaken may abide. ²⁸Therefore, let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, have gratitude, whereby let us serve God acceptably

with reverence and fear: ²⁹for, also, our God is a consuming fire.

CHAPTER XIII.

Miscellaneous directions, 1-25.

¹LET brotherly love continue. ²Be not forgetful of hospitality; for by this some entertained angels unawares. ³Remember those who are in bonds, as bound with them; those who are afflicted, as being also yourselves in the body. ⁴Let marriage be honorable in all things and the bed undefiled: but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. ⁵Let your conduct be free from covetousness: be contented with the things which you have; for He hath said, "I will surely not fail thee, nor will I by any means forsake thee:" ⁶so that we may confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear: what shall man do to me?"

⁷Call to mind your guides, who spake to you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the end of their course.

⁸Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. ⁹Be not carried away by doctrines diverse and foreign *to the gospel*: for it is well that the heart be established in grace; not in meats, which profited not those who occupied themselves in them.

¹⁰We have an altar from which they who serve the tabernacle have not a right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of the animals, whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high-priest, are burned outside of the encampment. ¹²Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered outside of the gate. ¹³Let us, therefore, go out to him outside of the encampment, bearing his reproach; ¹⁴for we have not here an abiding city, but we are seeking one which is to come. ¹⁵By him, therefore, let us offer up the sacrifice of praise continually to God; that is, the fruit of lips openly giving thanks to his

name. ¹⁶Of doing good, also, and communicating *to others*, be not forgetful; for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased.

¹⁷Obeys your guides and be in subjection; for they watch for your souls, as those who shall give an account: that they may do this with joy, and not sorrowing; for this would be profitless to you.

¹⁸Pray for us; for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live aright. ¹⁹But I beseech you the more earnestly to do this that I may the sooner be restored to you.

²⁰Now may the God of peace who brought up from the dead the Shepherd of the sheep, the great *Shepherd*, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹make you perfect in every good work for doing his will, doing in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever. Amen.

²²But I beseech you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation; for I have also briefly written to you.

²³Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he soon come, I shall see you.

²⁴Salute all your guides and all the saints. Those from Italy salute you.

²⁵GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.

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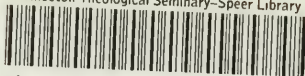
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